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[Theoretical
Memories]

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THE
OLD TIMES AND THE NEW.

(J. L. BLAIRIE)

Eheu ! fugaces, Postume, Postume,
Labuntur anni.

LONDON :
CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.
1868.

LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET
AND CHURCH LANE.

MINDFUL OF HIS CONSTANT FRIENDSHIP

IN OTHER YEARS,

I GRATEFULLY INSCRIBE THIS VOLUME

TO

ALEXANDER MORISON, OF BOGNIE, ESQ.,

VICE-LIEUTENANT OF THE COUNTY OF BANFF, N.B.

PREFACE.

THE following pages purport to be reminiscences written by a country gentleman in the North of Scotland, who was born in the second half of the eighteenth century.

In offering them to the public, the Editor is well aware that he stands largely in need of its indulgence. He fears that the style is open to the same criticism which Dr. Parr applied to the volumes of a distinguished countryman, Malcolm Laing, and that he has often failed "in protecting English idiom from Scotch invasion." He makes no pretensions to be the medium of supplying original information; and he will be more than satisfied if the record which they contain receives any share of approbation.

May, 1868.

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THE OLD TIMES AND THE NEW.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY DAYS.

Pray do not mock me.
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Four score and upwards.

SHORTLY before my birth the whole continent of Europe was in a blaze. Frederic the Great, jealous of the alliance between France and Austria, and eager for the further aggrandizement of the house of Hohenzollern, had precipitated the Seven Years' War; and although the heroic Maria Theresa reckoned among her allies the Emperor of Russia, the Kings of France and Sweden, the Queen of Poland, and the rulers of Saxony and Bavaria, she found herself unequal to contend successfully with the armies of Prussia, whose ally was the King of England.

When I was born, Clive, by the brilliancy of his military operations, and the sagacity which marked his civil administration, was consolidating our vast

Indian empire, and our cousins on the great American continent were still faithful to the sovereignty of the British crown.

The circumstances of our own rebellion had not been effaced from the recollection of my family and its retainers; and although in public such things might not be confessed, I suspect there were not a few of our people who, in their heart of hearts, gave more allegiance to the memory of the Prince than to the throne of the Georges: some of them, I daresay, still squeezed the orange with significant gesture, and could intimate a dangerous toast so dexterously as to escape the ban of penal statutes.

My own life has not been free from excitement, produced little indeed by its ordinary concerns, but often intensely stirred by striking events in the great world around. There I have seen old dynasties tottering to their base, and the occupants of thrones proud in the records of their antiquity give way to the parvenus of yesterday.

I occupy the old house that for centuries my family have been happy to call their home. Its thick and ivied walls and unadorned exterior look with disdain on the architectural efforts of modern days, and its interior arrangements remain unaffected by the changes and caprices of fashion; but for all that it has attractions for me that compensate for

the absence of modern comforts, and I owe it an allegiance, to which I have been faithful through life, and which, I hope, will serve me to the end.

That casement arch'd with ivy's brownest shade,
First to these eyes the light of heaven convey'd.

Each glade has its own memory—each winding of the river recalls some old association, and my trees are my familiar friends. I have watched with melancholy interest the slow decay of some, and with pride the luxuriant growth of others, under whose shady boughs I delight to rest in happy leisure.

Hic latis otia fundis
Speluncæ, vivique lacus, hoc frigida Tempe
Mugitusque boum, mollesque sub arbore somni !

My father was one of the easiest-going men I can remember. Nothing put him out of humour or disturbed his serenity. He invariably took the bright view of things. If prices were low, he was sure they would soon rise. If the harvest was a bad one, it was at all events better than the preceding, and when his valued friend and neighbour the Laird of Corrachree blew his brains out, he found consolation in the reflection that he had not terminated his existence by the less gentlemanlike process of hanging. He ate well—got drunk “like a gentle-

man," and was remarkable for his somnolent propensities. He swore great oaths, but these were intended only as a "set off" to conversation, which without them would have been insipid. A "grieve" managed, or rather mismanaged the home farm, and the parish schoolmaster received our rents. My father was no sportsman, had no turn for reading, and generally was without any occupation whatever. This however seemed to increase the estimation in which he was held by the neighbours, and one of our tenants was known to have remarked: "Some lairds shoot, some hunt, and others fish; but our laird is a *real* gentleman, for he does nothing." Yet he loved the country with all his heart. He was of opinion, with Virgil and Horace, that the life of a country squire is the happiest which the world supplies.

Beatus ille, qui procul negotiis,
Ut prisca gens mortalium;
Paterna rura bobus exercet suis,
Solutus omne fœnore.

He had a nervous dislike to public schools, and so the services were secured of a young "probationer" belonging to the kirk, under whose mild sway my elementary studies were commenced at home. David Ogilvie received the modest stipend of fifteen pounds a year, and board and washing were found for him. I have been told that the calls

he made in this last respect were singularly light. In one particular the position of teacher and pupil was reversed. In outward appearance and in many of his habits he was not unlike that famous pedagogue whom "Sir Walter" has made to live for ever, and overflowed with the milk of human kindness. To utter a sharp reproof or stinging word was foreign to his nature. In the schoolroom I had everything my own way, and how I made any progress, or indeed acquired the most ordinary rudiments, is a problem, which, as I look back upon this period, I am utterly unable to solve. In other accomplishments, however, I soon became a proficient. Before I was twelve years old I was already an expert angler and good shot, things not to be despised in their way, but scarcely conducive to rapid advancement in that sphere where my worthy preceptor was supposed to rule supreme. I could "spear" salmon and "knieve" trout with any man in the parish. For this proficiency I was indebted to a tutor of a very different stamp. One of our dependants was John Grant—a great pluralist in his way—for he discharged to us the triple duties of gardener, ground-officer, and gamekeeper. His earlier history was more than equivocal. He had been a noted poacher, and owed his employment in our service to my father's leniency as a magistrate, and

to the opinion that an offender of this sort becomes the most efficient keeper. When I first made his acquaintance this ancient blemish had been forgotten, and no servant was more valued or trustworthy. Our acres were not broad enough to entitle us to the luxury of a "fool," so that no functionary of this order helped, by his knavery, to spread dissension in the kitchen, and to diminish John Grant's influence up stairs. Unlike the manner of pot-hunting men, he disdained to take an unfair advantage of a hare in its form, or of a covey of partridges while quietly reposing in a stubble field; but his nerve never failed him, and his aim was of the deadliest, and I have often thanked him in my heart for that zest for manly recreation with which he invested me. These were not the times of strict preserving and of rigorous prosecutions, and yet, in the language of Dandie Dinmont, my father's tenants might each have exclaimed—with no other feeling than a proud one—"Plenty, man! I believe there's mair hares than sheep on my farm; and for the muir fowl and the grey fowl, they lie as thick as doos in a docket." It was long ere we prevailed on John to retire on full pay from active service, and if his son had not been promised the office, all our efforts must have been fruitless. He insisted on retaining brevet rank, and—although the new keeper was over six feet, and

a grandfather—he never addressed, or spoke of him, but as the “laddie.” His old age was very serene, and the only sorrow that weighed upon him was the increasing labour which he used to tell us it cost him to *massacre* his food! Peace to his memory. There are no such Nimrods now-a-days.

In my childhood another personage came to reside with us, who was the real “Head of the House.” This was my father’s spinster sister, Mistress Betty, as she was familiarly distinguished. My father had never been a frugal manager, and would have made an imbecile Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had suffered things to fall into alarming confusion, and except for the presence of my good aunt, poverty must have stared us in the face. Her wise supervision had become a necessity. She possessed “majestic sense;” and like Frederic the Great’s sister, it might be said of her, that she was

Sexu fœmina—Vir ingenio.

The extreme plainness of her person, and the quaint mode in which she enveloped it, were almost ludicrous to behold; but her great intelligence, warmth of heart, and charming conversational powers, made one forget unkindnesses of nature, while her pleasant and cordial manners offered an agreeable contrast to that frigid formality which ladies of her age and

class so often assumed. In another respect she differed from them. She neither plastered with white nor raddled with red, so that her toilet was never hindered by liberal applications of powder and paint. She had no copartnership in Pope's lines :—

Now sinful beauty puts on all its arms,
The fair each moment rises in its charms.

To her I owe lasting gratitude. Without stinginess, she checked all wasteful expenditure, and the judiciousness of her arrangements, in the direction of the family property, made her influence felt in its improved appearance and increased rent-roll; nor during her presidency was our social reputation in the least degree impaired.

Our country doctor must not be forgotten. He was my father's chief associate, and his weekly and often daily presence at our dinner-table by no means portended a sickly state of affairs. In the parish for near fifty years he had been its shining light. He was one of those men, who, quick to acquire an influence over others, never lose their hold, and are consulted on all occasions. His admirable common sense helped to conceal professional deficiencies, and a fund of anecdote, always pleasantly retailed, which even frequent repetition failed to make wearisome, secured for him a welcome reception. Except in

the science of medicine, he was vastly well informed ; but had fortune not favoured his prescriptions, the treatment he enjoined must soon have desolated the district. In other departments he was a high authority. As a veterinary he was unrivalled, and threw the pretensions of the wisest women into the shade. He reared the finest cattle, and raised the best crops in the parish ; and if his drugs had a mean reputation, not so had his whisky. There was one thing about his practice which always made it popular. He was a candid physician. If he thought there was danger he was at no pains to conceal it, and when the malady puzzled him, he made no effort to hide his perplexity. My aunt used to say that during a severe illness in my boyhood she became extremely alarmed (for in spite of the good doctor's devoted attentions, my condition got rapidly worse), and eagerly inquired what ailed me. "Blow me, madam, if I know !" was the ingenuous, though not very comforting reply. We have had many parish doctors since these days ; some of them have been skilful practitioners, but in general estimation, the memory of my old friend soars high above them all.

For several years the monotony of my life, although never disagreeable, was unrelieved, and that state of things might have been continued, but for the death of the parish minister, and the selection, by my father,

of David Ogilvie as his successor. On the new parson's fitness for the office, I need not dilate. His undoubted worth covered a multitude of deficiencies, and it was not the custom in those days to attempt the enforcement of any veto upon the choice of the patron. I am bound in fairness to avow that I never listened to a less impressive expounder of the Scriptures. His attempts at oratory—when he made any—happily of the rarest occurrence, were painful failures, while the obscurity of his points of doctrine was most perplexing. Nevertheless he was not without admirers, on the principle possibly of the old woman, who exclaimed, "Eh, man! was na that a grand discoorse; it jumbled the head and confused the understanding!" His eyes remained fixed with scrupulous fidelity on his paper, and thus he appeared to have wholly ignored the declaration of the General Assembly in 1726, that the reading of sermons was "very displeasing to God's people, and caused no small obstruction to spiritual consolation!" If the style and substance of his preaching laid it open to this defect, I fear it likewise produced a more than usual tendency to somnolency among his flock, which was not interrupted in the way described by Crabbe, when writing of another divine:—

He such sad coils, with words of vengeance kept,
That our best sleepers startled as they slept.

As the reward of a life highly respectable indeed, but guiltless of any academical distinction, his declining years were made positively jubilant by the bestowal of a degree of Doctor of Divinity by a northern university, which he prized more than if the lamp of Aladdin had passed into his possession. The god of love had never cared to exert an influence on him, but a female relative—grim and gaunt—who, when I knew her, numbered at least fifty summers, had long been his housekeeper and ministered to his comforts. I well recollect dining with him one Sunday not long before his death, and the talented gentleman whom I had appointed as his “assistant and successor” was likewise present. The poor Doctor seemed greatly preoccupied during the repast, and at its close desired the young divine and the old woman to stand up. It was soon apparent that he meditated a union between them which was to last for life. She, nothing loath, tried to look interesting and devout, but the improvised bridegroom rushed panic-stricken from the apartment, and no persuasion could secure his return. I have never found a friend so single-minded and sincere. The sphere of his usefulness was limited but he was constantly doing good. His was that charity, which “thinketh no evil.”

In the clear mirror of his moral page
We trace the manners of a purer age.

CHAPTER II.

OUR VISITS TO EDINBURGH.

CONSEQUENT upon my tutor's promotion, arrangements were made for our migration to Edinburgh, where my studies were to be directed by those eminent men, who, recently appointed to chairs, were investing it with fresh renown. By us, who had never been so far from home, and especially by those primitive domestics that were to attend us, it was viewed with an uneasy feeling. Travelling by short stages with our own horses, which were more familiar with the plough than the family coach, we at length completed our pilgrimage, consuming in it about the same time as in these later days is required to compass the passage from Liverpool to New York.

Our visits were continued every autumn for several years, until the health of my relatives made them impossible; and meanwhile I had assumed the responsibilities of the married state. My father, like most of his landed brethren of the day, was devoted to the Tories. "Politics" was the only subject

which really roused him. The best pictures we possessed were those of Montrose and Claverhouse, and they helped to keep alive the remembrance of events which had excited the fiercest passions, and on whose issue the last hopes for the restoration of the Stuarts fell. The aid of the doctor, parson, and schoolmaster was largely invoked to strengthen my belief; but it was powerless in presence of other associations, and the political creed of my ancestors became an easy prey to the Whigs of Edinburgh. Although numerically weak, they comprised our best intellects. Dugald Stuart, the "Eloquent Professor of Whiggery," as he has been called, and his distinguished colleagues, Playfair and Dalzel, were prominent members of the party. Henry Erskine was its leader, the greatest ornament of our bar, and whose younger brother had then achieved the same professional distinction in England. Although my senior by many years, he admitted me to his confidence and friendship, and for that most amiable man I was inspired by feelings of warm affection. It is those early attachments that take deepest root, and their fascinations haunt us in later years, long after the friends themselves have passed away.

L'on revient toujours
À ses premiers amours.

Erskine had then ceased to be Lord-Advocate, and

his legal brethren had not yet disgraced themselves by deposing him from the deanship. His admirable wit and colloquial repartee disarmed the gravest and excited the merriment of all—

With sounds that echo still.


No success elated, no flattery spoiled him, and he was utterly without any of that puerile conceit and those egotistical pretensions which were blemishes in the character of the Lord Chancellor. He had few opportunities in parliament, from the brief period during which he was a member; but men who heard him plead at the bar of the House of Lords, used to say, that great as his brother's forensic gifts were, those of the Scotch advocate were not dimmed by immediate comparison. His elder brother, the Earl of Buchan, was a very odd person. He possessed all the vanity of the Chancellor, and none of the *bonhomie* of "Harry." His stinginess became a proverb; and although his treatment of his brothers was as niggard as of everybody else, he constantly spoke of the liberality which he had shown them, and claimed all the merit of their extraordinary advancement. The only joke he is remembered to have made did not receive much applause from the relative to whom it was addressed. Placing his head under the lock of the door, he said, "See, Harry, here is '*lock* on the

human understanding.'” And “A very poor edition, my lord,” was the fraternal reply. Through Erskine I was made acquainted with other celebrities on the same side. The Whig leaders by their powerful talents soon produced influential impressions ; and to them, and that circle of younger and remarkable men on whom their mantles fell, must be attributed the ultimate triumph of the liberal cause in Scotland.

Sir Harry Moncreiff was one of our great chiefs. No man ever showed more devoted attachment to the revolution settlement—the act, as he pronounced it, of “saxteen hunder and echty-echt;” and his undaunted courage and energy sought every occasion to proclaim its principles. His aspirations for the political regeneration of his countrymen did not interfere with his holier duties, and the metropolis contained no more popular divine. It was he who first gave cohesion to the evangelical party in the kirk, and his opinions gained for him the distinction of “Sir Harry the Wild.” Besides him, Whiggery at that time had no other distinguished clerical representative ; but there were among his contemporaries several Presbyterian ministers whose names will always be remembered with the respect due to great piety and eminent attainments. Principal Robertson, the historian ; Principal Campbell of Aberdeen, whose ‘Dissertation on Miracles’ and the ‘Philosophy of

Rhetoric' produced great sensation at the time; and Doctor Blair, occupy the most conspicuous places; while other men less known to the world, although of much local repute, are still remembered by the generation to which I belong. Such were Henry and Macknight, Erskine, Carlyle, and Hill.

In the beginning of the century Whiggery found a few brilliant exponents in the pages of the 'Edinburgh Review,' which first appeared in 1802. The Academy of Physics numbered among its members, Henry Mackenzie, Henry Brougham, and Francis Jeffrey, and this society is said to have originated the journal, which immediately secured the aid of the most powerful contributors. Jeffrey was the soul of the undertaking, and yet to casual observers he was the last man on whom such a choice ought prudently to have fallen. He had only recently joined the bar, and his ambition appeared directed, more to an influential position in the fashionable reunions of the metropolis, than to the editorship of a political and critical journal. There is no one who does not know how admirably he has justified the selection. It is the young who regenerate the world; and it is not too much to assert, that the luminous political disquisitions and the excellently-sustained criticisms which he presented, at once exercised a striking influence on public opinion and on public taste. From



its commencement the 'Review' was a great success, and universally recognized as a thoroughly qualified and established tribunal. When we remember who Jeffrey's most prominent colleagues were, and how illustrious most of them have since become, it would have been strange had their achievements been less brilliant. Among those who helped to consolidate its renown, are to be reckoned Henry Lord Brougham; the wise and witty Sydney Smith; Allen and Black, distinguished as physiologists; Thomas Campbell, the poet; Leyden, famous in oriental literature; and Francis Horner, who died in the flower of his age and in the opening of what must have been a noble career—"In flore primo, tantæ indolis juvenis, extinctus est, summa consecuturus, si virtutes ejus maturiscent!"

A few years later, and the 'Quarterly Review' owed its existence to another Scotchman, who had sprung up in London, and whose representative in the third generation continues to make Albemarle Street famous. John McMurray on coming to the metropolis dropt that part of his surname which proclaimed his Highland descent—just as McAll made himself "Almack," and McRaw, became "Ducrow"—and was henceforward known as "Murray" only. The 'Quarterly' was projected as a Tory organ, in opposition to the 'Edinburgh Review,' and enlisted

on its side an array of literary talent which made failure impossible. Its early vigour has been well sustained ; and to that the pens of Gifford, Croker, and Lockhart have conspicuously contributed. John Murray connected himself with Lord Byron, with whom and other literary magnates he lived on terms of friendly intercourse. It was at the publisher's counter where Byron and Scott first shook hands. The daily assemblage of visitors in Albemarle Street has been commemorated by the noble poet :—

The room's so full of wits and bards,
Crabbes, Campbells, Crokers, Freres, and Wards.

Such meetings had been unknown in town since those days when Johnson and Goldsmith, Burke and Garrick, spent their evenings together at the 'Turk's Head.'

The prosperity of the 'Edinburgh' and the 'Quarterly' produced another magazine which likewise does us honour. In 1817, William Blackwood, himself a man of literary tastes, then a bookseller in Edinburgh, and since well known as an enterprising and successful publisher, started a magazine to which he gave his own name, and dedicated it to the glories of Toryism. The interest which 'Blackwood's Magazine' at once excited by its ability soon left in the shade other monthly contemporaries, and years have added to its fame. By the 'Tories' it was

welcomed as cordially as the 'Review' had been by the Whigs, and it has served them right loyally and well. Political opponents have been covered with sarcasm and abuse to the satisfaction of the most rancorous; but into party warfare we do not look for the importation of judicial language, and we despise an adversary who cannot hit hard. In this respect 'Blackwood' has never exposed itself to our contempt. Professor Wilson has long been its most eminent contributor, and by his able and versatile hand its present popularity is mainly upheld.

During the different periods of my earlier acquaintance with Edinburgh, it could boast of other luminaries besides those I have already referred to. Cullen and Gregory have shed a light on the science of medicine, and Henry Mackenzie, the 'Man of Feeling, our Scottish Addison, and Mr. Alison, the author of 'Essays on Taste,' made delightful the society in which they moved. The name of Alison has received increased honour in the present generation. The historian of Europe, by his ability and research, has proved the worthiness of his descent, and established a claim on our gratitude and respect. It is to the credit of Mackenzie that he early discerned the genius of one whom I may call the most remarkable Scotchman of the last century, and was the first to find admission for him into our

literary circles. None certainly had a deeper knowledge of the human heart than that "peerless peasant," Robert Burns, or knew so well all the manners and prejudices of his countrymen. Whose memory is embalmed with such affection in their hearts. His lowly origin, the vicissitudes of his life, his early death, have all contributed to invest his name with an interest that will never die. No Roman excelled him in love and pride of country.

O Scotia my dear, my native soil,
For whom my warmest wish to heaven is sent,
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blessed with health and peace and sweet content.

Foremost among Tory notables was Henry Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville, who possessed great versatility of talent. Well connected, and early introduced into public life, he soon acquired parliamentary distinction. His official position, and especially his intimacy with the younger Pitt, made him an important personage, and the whole government patronage north of the Tweed was at his disposal. He had the faculty, which his chief lacked, of making and attaching friends, and thus was eminently useful. It was not likely that a constellation of this order in London should have been less reverently regarded in Edinburgh, and there, more than the homage due to mortals was offered to him. None served his party

more faithfully, if such fidelity means that only those benefited by his smile who gave an unqualified adherence to the rule of the Tories. Scotch dukes, cunning dowagers and bewitching maidens, embryo heroes and budding senators, lawyers, professors, parsons, dominies, and candidates ambitious of becoming gaugers, were all willing to fall down and worship the image of "Harry Dundas." His impeachment, although terminating in acquittal, marred the lustre of his career; but the power he wielded among us has never since been approached, and no Scotchman, except Lord Bute, had been so influential in the imperial cabinet. The Minister had often to rely on him for mollifying the able, impetuous, and all but implacable Thurlow. Then the Chancellor was enticed to Dundas's villa at Wimbledon, and indulged in opportunities of abusing, to his heart's content, his chief and all the world, over copious potations of undeniable wine, to him made the more delectable by an unrestricted license to indulge in the choicest oaths.

On the same side of the question of older men, and of local reputation, was Mr. Blair, afterwards the president of our Supreme Court. Blair was one of those persons who only appear at distant intervals, of whose success nobody is jealous, and whom all love and respect. There were others whose forensic

abilities were more showy, but in the soundness of his professional advice, and in the excellence of his judicial deportment, few have surpassed him. He was the son of that parish minister still remembered as the author of 'The Grave,' one of the standard classics of our poetical literature. There was more than one of us who appropriated for the president, when we heard of his death, those words by his father—

Sure the last end

Of the good man is peace ! How calm his exit !

Night dews fall not more gently on the ground,

Nor weary worn-out winds expire so soft.

Of younger men belonging to that party, by far the most remarkable was Walter Scott. Trained to the law, with which his birth connected him, he never exhibited any great superiority of legal talent, had no pretensions to oratory, and as a mere lawyer was easily outstripped by men infinitely his inferiors in general understanding. Indeed, he afterwards confessed that he had little liking for the profession, and that he and it came to stand on the footing which honest Slender consoled himself upon having established with Mistress Ann Page. "There was no great love between us at the beginning, and it pleased Heaven to decrease it on further acquaintance." Those who knew Scott best, confidently predicted for him a career of eminence; but I.


doubt if the most partial of his friends—and their name was legion—was prepared for those bursts of true genius, illustrated in wonderful conception and execution, of which ‘*The Lay of the Last Minstrel*,’ affords such striking evidence—his first work to command that admiration and consolidate that renown which have made his name a household word in Scotland, and have attached to his writings, poetical as well as prose, the universal homage of the civilized world. It is long since Sir Walter left us; but if whispers from this earth reach the Elysian fields, he will know how many recollections of sympathy and affection remain behind. Although he lived in times of strong political excitement, and was himself the keenest of partizans, all of us were so proud of him, so worshipped his genius, and had such respect for the manliness of his character, that he had not even a political enemy; and when pecuniary involvements—occasioned by very imprudent trade speculations—destroyed the dreams of his youth and the accumulations of years of earnest labour, offers of assistance were so freely made, that had he chosen to accept one half of them, his affairs might have been arranged in a week. He rejected the whole, and exclaimed, “This right hand shall work it all off.” The creditors, in recognition of his noble efforts in their behalf, presented

him with his library, manuscripts, and plate, and arrangements were likewise made for the retention of Abbotsford in the family. There, surrounded as in his more opulent days, by a few familiar friends, the 'Great Wizard' charmed by the simplicity of his manners, his copious information on every subject, and the joyous flow of anecdote which never wearied. An old comrade has said that a good idea of his conversation on these occasions might be found in the supposition that one of his novels had been "cut into talk." That proud resolution was unhappily not destined to be fully carried out. Incessant labour, and the seeds of a fatal disorder had begun to do their work, and he sought in vain for renewed health in sunnier lands, crowded with the classical associations of antiquity; but in the midst of these, which in other circumstances would have delighted and interested him, his great longing was for home. The turrets and towers of Abbotsford were pleasanter to his eyes than the dome of St. Peter's, and the bright waters of the Yarrow than the banks of the stately Tiber. Perhaps he remembered the lines which he had written thirty years before:—

By Yarrow's streams still let me stray,
Though none should guide my feeble way;
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
Although it chill my wither'd cheek.

The Court of Session, in the days I speak of, brought a strange collection of so-called sages together. I fear the bench of our Supreme Court, as it existed towards the close of the last century, must be pronounced a disgrace to the country. The oddities and eccentricities of some of its members were only relieved by peculiarities—not so harmless—coarseness, and intemperance on the part of others. Occasional exceptions indeed modified these general features; but a man of civilized feelings, manners, and appearance, having fourteen colleagues constantly by his side, most of whom were *lusi naturæ* in their way, ran violent risks of catching some of those curious distempers that surrounded him. A judge in our time who should permit political feeling to influence him, or exhibit the smallest taint of favouritism, would be driven from his office by the universal verdict of public opinion; yet some of these men often exposed themselves to the imputation, and had as little political independence about them as the judges who polluted the sources of justice in the reign of our seventh James. All of them were not deficient in law; but the conduct as well as appearance of some was so grotesque, that a glance could not be bestowed on the “auld fifteen,” as they sat huddled together, without one’s visible faculties being largely drawn upon. Monboddo,

advocating the existence of mermaids and satyrs with his absurd speculations on the affinity between the human race and the monkey tribe; Swinton, whose ponderous placidity was never disturbed by the sprightly sallies of Harry Erskine; Eskgrove, the most pedantic of mankind, who suffered at a later period from the wit and sarcasm of Brougham, which he unmercifully applied; Hermand, famed for his "potations pottle deep;" and Braxfield, for the indecency of his sayings, his rough humour, and for harshness and insulting jests on the bench, were amongst the most notable of the "senators of justice." Braxfield presided for years in our criminal court without justice being once tempered with mercy. His love for hanging was overpowering. "Yer a very clever cheil," said he, on one occasion, to a prisoner charged with some minor offence, and loquaciously disposed, "but ye wad be nane the war o' a hanging;" and while preparing to take his seat at the trials for sedition in the end of the century, he thus urged an acquaintance to attend him: "Come awa,' man, and help me to hang ane o' they daamned scoondrels." Jeffreys and Scroggs practised in a wider field, but a hundred years after their time, we in Scotland had a judge who is entitled to share the same sort of infamous renown. That school of magistrates has disappeared; and the



bench, recruited from the best men at the bar, often selected irrespective of political partizanship, exhibits an independence and intelligence of action which have long commanded the utmost confidence and respect.

It is strange to reflect, that while our legal functionaries were not superior to those I have been describing, a Scotchman, who in boyhood had crossed the border, never to recross it, sat in the chief seat in Westminster Hall, whose high intellect, profound erudition, splendid eloquence, and judicial excellence, gained for him as a judge universal applause. This was the man, long the pillar of administration in the Commons, the "silver-tongued Murray," who, for thirty years, chief justice of England, is now justly regarded as the founder of the commercial code of the nation, and will be remembered for generations to come as the "great Lord Mansfield;" and when he was consolidating his career, another countryman, the son of one of these judges, disgusted, it is said, at his treatment by the bench, disbarred himself in haste, and quitting for ever Parliament House, became a candidate for the favours of fortune in a more splendid sphere, nor did the goddess prove unkind. Wedderburn, by the fervour of his eloquence and his great powers in debate, soon gained a conspicuous position, forensic and parliamentary;

and after being solicitor- and attorney-general, and the chief of the Common Pleas, as Lord Loughborough was not unequal to the duties of the "Marble Chair." Both died childless; but the earls' coronets which their talents had won, have by the favour of the Crown, descended to collateral relations. Thus in the last century, and nearly at the same time, we find these compatriots presiding with marked distinction over the courts of common law and equity in England, and exercising in both houses of Parliament a most powerful and remarkable influence. It is Churchill who says—

The Scots are poor, cries surly English pride,
True is the charge, nor by themselves denied;
Are they not then in strictest reason clear
Who wisely come to mend their fortunes here?

CHAPTER III.

SETTLING DOWN TO COUNTRY LIFE.

IN the latter part of 1789 the active duties of a country gentleman devolved upon me. Scotland at this time was in great measure isolated. Its arterial communication was wretched, and the prospects of speedy improvement were not bright. Yet improvement came earlier and was more effective than most of us imagined. Where I lived there were no public conveyances, unless indeed the carrier's cart could be called one; and for the transmission and receipt of our correspondence we were indebted to the slow delivery of that functionary, and in some districts more highly favoured, an antiquated man or woman, cynically named "the runner," made weekly journeys on foot to and from the nearest market-town and represented—I do not say effectively—the present system of postal communication.

Those who are accustomed to the convenience of modern conveyances will fail to understand what the

discomforts and delays of travelling were then. In 1780 a letter was addressed to the same Lord Braxfield I have been referring to, by Boswell, better known as "Bozzy," who was a member of the bar and the son of a judge, which from its curiosity will repay perusal. It is on the subject of circuit holding in Scotland, and contains a recommendation to the judges not to travel faster than the waggon which carried the "baggage of the circuit." But for years posterior to that date the judges and bar made the circuit of the north on horseback, and were not unfrequently obliged, owing to the flooded state of rivers, to make considerable detours. I recollect when, instead of handsome bridges spanning our rivers, and forming the key-stone of present communication with the south, the traveller had to trust for the conveyance of himself and horse to some rickety ferry-boat, usually under the command of a female, whose husband's more profitable employment elsewhere caused him to depute to her the office of skipper. Until the termination of the war there were no mail coaches north of the Dee. Other public conveyances in their earlier history were extremely irregular, and the Jehus who conducted them were famed for independence and the arbitrary nature of their arrangements. About this period I spent a night at the *inn* of a provincial town (*hotels*

are very modern institutions), with the intention of taking coach the following morning. I asked the barmaid what was the hour of starting, and received the unsatisfying reply, "Whan Davie (the coachman) rises!" The weather was unpropitious, and Davie preferred his bed to the box. As he was at length getting ready, a countryman, cold and wet, made his appearance, who, anxious to possess the luxury of an inside place, agitatingly inquired, "Are yer insides a' oot?" an inquiry, which, in its literal signification, suggested the possibility of a very uncomfortable condition of affairs. The coaches of those days did not accomplish *per diem* either long journeys or rapid travelling, although the names which distinguished them, implied both. The Swift, the Express, the Rapid, the Fly, were all popular cognomens; and to be driven fifty miles, at from five to six miles an hour, was a good day's journey and quick locomotion. Of course there was no travelling during the night.

Even a fertile country, without roads, is of little value. Our public roads, now, both in respect of condition and management, are efficiently regulated by acts of parliament, but such provisions are comparatively recent, and before their existence, travelling in many districts, except on foot and horseback, was impossible during portions of the year. In the

case of Gowrie, one of our best agricultural districts, there was no road prior to 1790 that could admit of carting through the winter and spring months. All produce sent from home, had to be transported on horseback; and such was the slavery of threshing grain and making market of it, that there was difficulty in obtaining the requisite supply of labour. The turnpike act and the judicious application of the statute service money, as well as the energy and public spirit of the landed interest, often powerfully assisted by the municipal authorities, have provided such excellent thoroughfares, as to make the oldest among us wonder how, in their absence, a return to chaos was averted. Parliament fully recognized the importance of turnpikes, and conferred on our entailed proprietors the right of raising money on mortgages for the purposes of their construction, to the extent of a year's rental of the respective estates which they intersected. For the system of road-making now generally in use we are under great obligations to our countryman, Mr. Macadam. Our English neighbours soon discovered its superiority, and fully adopted it, and it is also extensively practised in France.

I do not doubt that Gibbon echoed the opinions of his contemporaries with reference to Caledonia, when he described the Romans as turning "with

contempt from gloomy hills assailed by the winter tempest, from lakes concealed by a blue mist, and from cold and lonely heaths over which the deer of the forest were chased by naked barbarians." When Dr. Johnson published an account of his journey to the Hebrides in 1773, Scotland was viewed by most Englishmen as a dreary and perilous wilderness. Only those came to look at it whose business transactions made this necessary, and they fancied that their comforts were best consulted by making the sojourn as brief as possible.

A few years later, and we were suffering from the shocks of adverse events occurring in different parts of the world. Great Britain had emerged from a severe and humiliating conflict with the states of America, which was produced and continued by the obstinacy of the king and the imbecile counsels of his ministers. We had waged war against those whose "blood, language, religion, and institutions" were derived from ourselves, and an angry and irrevocable separation followed.

France was passing through the throes of that revolution which ushered in a reign of terror unprecedented in the history of civilized nations, involving all Europe in years of war and bloodshed; and had hurled from the throne the representative of its ancient monarchy—consigning not him only, but his

beautiful and brave queen, to a cruel and ignominious death.

The discontents of Ireland pressed us with a nearer danger ; and the united fleets of France, Spain, and Holland threatened to deprive us of that supremacy on the ocean which we had long maintained. For a time it even seemed as if our own seamen were to lend themselves to our enemies. The mutiny at the Nore produced painful and uneasy feelings which were not soon forgotten.

Our soldiers at any rate remained faithful ; and it would have been monstrous to believe in the justice of a satire like that in which a witty writer has since spoken of them :—

Though soldiers are the true support,
The natural allies of courts,
Woe to the monarch who depends
Too much on his red-coated friends.
For even soldiers sometimes *think*,
Nay, colonels have been known to reason !
And reasoners, whether clad in pink,
Or red, or blue, are on the brink
(Nine cases out of ten) of treason.

CHAPTER IV.

THE COUNTRY; THEN AND NOW.

LANDOWNERS formerly were necessarily restricted in their intercourse with other classes. The country was owned by men who lived constantly on their estates, were concerned in no other occupations than those afforded, and whose intimacies rarely extended beyond the circle of their own class. Lairds affected to look down on everybody who trusted to trade for support; and, until the influence of the Reform Bill was really felt, the gulf which separated the commercial and agricultural interests was not fully spanned.

Putting aside some great territorial proprietors, the others, generally speaking, were poor, and that poverty was increasing with the appearance of each new generation. Younger children had to be placed in the world, and provision for them necessarily diminished the incomes of succeeding heirs. The

system of entail, which prevailed more or less extensively in all our counties, made progress extremely difficult.

The Montgomery Act—so called after its author, Sir James Montgomery, afterwards Lord Chief Baron in Scotland—was passed in 1770, and was the first measure to afford facilities to the owners of settled estates, as it enabled them, by means of enclosing, planting, draining, and building farm-steadings, to effect permanent improvements, of which they were authorized to fix upon their successors the burden of an equitable proportion. The machinery of this Act, which confers other beneficial powers, is somewhat cumbersome and particular, but its advantages have been eagerly sought after, and its benefits correspondingly experienced.

Many years subsequently another measure (bearing the name of its distinguished author, the Earl of Aberdeen), likewise in the interest of entailed proprietors, received legislative authority; which gave them the right to make provisions for widows and younger children to a specified *maximum* amount, for under numerous existing title-deeds, these were wholly disproportionate to the changed circumstances of the country, and the social position of the persons concerned.

But the boon which, above all others, has been

beneficial to this class of landowners, was conferred by Sir Robert Peel, when last in office. This Act authorizes advances to be made, upon the certificates of inspectors, for the drainage of lands, repayable in twenty-two annual instalments of equal amount, at the rate of six and a half per cent., reckoning principal and interest. Loans are thus obtained on terms infinitely more advantageous than would be possible in the open market, and means are supplied for promoting the greatest agricultural improvement of the age. The general system sanctioned by government is known as "furrow drainage," and to it we are mainly indebted to my intelligent friend James Smith of Deanston, who had before earned distinction for important mechanical improvements introduced into large cotton works with which he was connected. It has led to the annihilation of those yawning chasms which older "drainers" patronized, to the disfigurement as well as inconvenience of our fields. Our climate has been benefited by the impulse given to operations of the sort. They have changed for the better the appearance of the country, and augmented the productiveness, and therefore yearly value, of the soil.

Although the advance of agriculture was checked in former days by the operation of entails and their innumerable restrictions, these measures and minor

ones have afforded much relief.* It is difficult to see how, were the laws of entail and primogeniture to be abolished, the country would benefit to the extent predicted by their opponents. I have long thought that instead of being hindered by it, "primogeniture" really favoured the rapid growth of national wealth, inasmuch as it has stimulated the energies of younger sons, who have had to fight their own battles, and from whom every department in the state has been recruited. They have added to the glory of our army and navy—have become shining lights in the church and at the bar, and science and literature have benefited by their research and contributions. Not a colony that we possess but can point to some such members, who have amassed colossal fortunes, which many of them will bring back one day to the mother-country, there to be expended on the purchase of estates that for value and extent will dwarf the paternal acres and the inheritance of the first-born. Without the law of primogeniture, what would have been the probable career of numbers of these men? Is it unreasonable to assume that their intelligence, enterprise, and perseverance would have been lost—that their lives would have been spent in comparatively listless

* The "Rutherford" Act, subsequently, has conferred still greater boons on entailed proprietors.—Ed.

inactivity, with their patrimony diminished and their social condition reduced? And if we are to believe one class of political economists, we are suffering from another evil. These people tell us that our greatest territorial proprietors are nuisances, and that they mean to force from our legislators a law which shall make it impossible for any one man to possess an annual income from land beyond a fixed amount; but at this time of day, when we are accustomed to hear general restrictions declaimed against, it seems unreasonable to talk of introducing a new and partial kind of them; and if the proposal is to affect land, why not extend it to other interests as well? If those political economists think that the influence of great landowners is dangerous—may not the same danger, whatever it is, attach to immense incomes derived from other sources? Why not say to Mr. Green that his fleet of ships is already too extensive, and that he cannot be permitted to increase it; to employers of labour, that on no account shall the number of their workmen exceed ten thousand; or to our leviathan mercantile and banking-houses, that their yearly transactions must be limited to fifty millions? I have never found that the greatest estates present an appearance inferior to those of their small neighbours—that their homesteads are less convenient and

commodious, or fencing and draining there less attended to. The Duke of Northumberland's in England, and the Duke of Buccleuch's with us, exhibit the best evidence of agricultural prosperity. Tenants live upon them on remunerative terms, where no ruinous system of competition is encouraged, and rack-rents are unknown. The division of land which the removal of primogeniture would establish, and the limitation of its extent in the hands of single individuals, which that other proposition would effect, would of course soon change the social position of the landed interest as it now exists; but it is not so clear that such changes would be purely beneficial. I do not know why the heads of great families should not retain their natural and legitimate influence, if there are no personally disqualifying reasons. Our nobility and landed aristocracy offer a proud contrast to the same class as it exists in those continental states where the "Code Napoleon," repudiating all the rights of primogeniture, prevails; and although we may witness occasionally exceptional cases of evil and abuse through the action of the present rule, they ought not to be accepted as a wholesale condemnation of it, and made the ground for a change, which would not necessarily be an improvement.

The appearance of estates formerly exhibited few attractions. Buildings were mean-looking and badly

placed, and little or no attention was paid to the adjustment of the boundaries and the convenience of working.

Servate terminos quos patres vestri possuere,

was a maxim widely respected. It was a common practice that homesteads were erected at the joint expense of landlord and tenant. This was a costly arrangement, and bad for both. The tenant of course made his offer of rent in view of this advance; while it often happened that the withdrawal of capital hampered the means left at his disposal for the proper stocking and efficient management of the farm.

We suffered for generations from a system of "long leases," which broke in upon the ordinary relations of the contracting parties. Many of these were for a specified period in the first instance—"three nineteen years" for example—followed at its expiry by a fresh term, whose continuance depended upon the lives of nominees, and occasionally their endurance was even more extended. Those who granted them frequently sold for little more than a "mess of pottage" the birthright of their successors. This condition of things was extremely objectionable. It created an *imperium in imperio*—the same sort of "middleman" occupation from which Ireland has so long suffered—for the original lessee had full authority to sublet, and the dealing,

of all sub-lessees were with him alone. While this state of things prevailed, the man, whom the title-deeds represented as the owner, was little better than a puppet. As a rule these "middlemen" were an inferior class, had a hard struggle for their living, and were altogether incapable of effecting substantial improvements.

And if this was not an unusual mode of letting land in many counties, the manner in which general culture was carried on was yet more objectionable. No rules for cropping were prescribed. No artificial grasses were sown, and in the earlier part of the last century, turnip husbandry was unpractised. Cattle contrived to find a decent livelihood in the summer and autumn months, but in winter straw was their only article of food; and the return of spring discovered them in a condition so ill-favoured and lean-fleshed, that they must have resembled those voracious kine which appeared before the King of Egypt in his dream. We had no "prime Scots" in those days to come into successful competition with the herds of Devon and Hereford. The McCombies of Tillyfour are comparatively recent institutions in the country.

Midlothian even, which is perhaps the most closely and best cultivated of our counties, and from its situation possessed advantages which were denied to most others, seems, as late as 1770, to have been

considered in a very unsatisfactory condition. Lord Kames, an agricultural authority of high repute, thus criticizes it: "That county for the richness of its crops is more indebted to the fertility of its soil than to the skill of its farmers. What pity it is that so fine a county should be possessed by men so little grateful to nature for her bounties!" This brood of tillers of the ground has passed away, and their successors, by a combination of energy and enlightened intelligence, have long ago nobly redeemed it from the imputation.

We have everywhere begun in earnest to pay much greater attention to the character, arrangements, and situations of our farm buildings. It may be urged that in some of our northern counties the farms ought to be of larger size, and then the appearance of the country would be more pleasing to the eye; but it must be remembered that amongst our agricultural classes there, capital is distributed in small amounts, and if a change in this direction were to be general, we should have to abandon an old class of tenants, or deprive ourselves of the advantages of a fair and reasonable competition. In my father's time, a man who possessed a couple of hundred pounds had enough to stock and cultivate a farm of one hundred Scotch acres. To do so now, a tenant will absorb the greatest part of a thousand.

If we have been improving the accommodation and comforts of our steadings, and making rapid strides in every branch of agriculture—one great work remains behind, which, if longer neglected, must rise up in judgment against us. The miserable hovels—to call them *houses* would be a misnomer—in which our rural labourers live and rear large families are a national reproach. When the misery of all domestic arrangements is considered, the necessary want of every comfort, and the crowding together of poor persons, with habits no better than those of pigs, it is wonderful that the preponderating characteristics of our people as they go out into the world do not more resemble the savage, and that they submit to the restrictions of civilized life. Our homesteads in many instances are not what they ought to be, although much more consideration is shown for the wants of the cattle than for those of the human beings who wait upon them. Dr. Johnson, as everybody knows, had no great favour for our nation, and most of his statements on the subject ought to be received *cum grano salis*; but I can vouch for the correctness of his description of a cottier's residence in the Highlands, and it conveys no exaggerated account of the same condition of things, whether as applicable to that portion of the country, or to labourers' dwellings in numerous Lowland districts,

at the present time. He says: "A hut is constructed with loose stones, ranged for the most part with some tendency to circularity. It must be placed where the wind cannot act upon it with violence, because it has no cement; and where the water will run easily away, because it has no floor but the naked ground. The wall, which is commonly about six feet high, declines from the perpendicular a little inward. Such rafters as can be procured are then raised for a roof, and covered with heath, which makes a strong and warm thatch, kept from flying off by ropes of twisted heath, of which the ends, reaching from the centre of the thatch to the top of the wall, are held firm by the weight of a large stone. No light is admitted but at the entrance, and through a hole in the thatch which gives vent to the smoke. This hole is not directly over the fire, lest the rain should extinguish it, and the smoke therefore naturally fills the place before it escapes. Such is the general structure of the houses in which one of the nations of this opulent and powerful island has been hitherto content to live." It must be difficult for such a place to awaken the feelings of attachment, and scarcely possible that it should supply the abiding influences of home affection. If many of our peasants turn out drunken and depraved, and become poachers and smugglers, the only marvel is

that more do not follow the example. We have much to answer for; and the guilt of omission will, I trust, haunt us in such a fashion as to force upon us its removal. Public policy and even selfish considerations ought alone to influence in providing for their increased social comforts. We should endeavour to find for them homes which would not discourage the utmost frugality in their mode of living, but would help them to a more general realization of that touching view of things which the poet has presented in 'The Cotter's Saturday Night:—

His wee bit ingle blinking bonnily,
His clean hearthstane, his thrifty wife's smile,
The lispin infant prattlin on his knee,
Does a' his weary carkin cares beguile,
An' mak's him quite forget his labour and his toil.

The influence of example elsewhere ought likewise to stimulate us. In our great towns good men are busy in improving the dwellings of the working class, and in diminishing that overcrowding which is so fruitful of vice, disease, and misery in its worst form. Systems of sewage and copious supplies of fresh water have secured highly satisfactory sanitary results. Parliament has sanctioned measures which have restricted the hours of labour, and prevented the employment of children of tender years in our factories. Even among our mining population, which,

in intelligence and civilization, is probably behind other classes, vigorous efforts are being made to instruct and reclaim; and although frightful catastrophes occasionally occur—too often from negligence and over-security—the use of the invention which we owe to the genius of Sir Humphry Davy has immensely diminished the sacrifice of human life, and allowed great works to be prosecuted with safety and success. Houses of refuge, reformatories, and magdalens, are all of modern date, and have already more than realized the anticipations of their founders.

I think that the principle on which the existing system of letting farms on leases chiefly for nineteen years is founded is essentially just, and the practice has undoubtedly been highly conducive to the steady advance of agriculture. A lease encourages a tenant to make beneficial improvements which require time for development and to become reproductive; and it gives him a position and feeling of independence calculated to inspire confidence and self-respect. I do not mean an “independence” in any way antagonistic to his proprietor, for that ought always to be discouraged; but a security that, whatever happens to the affairs of the latter—such, for example, as the sale of his estate—all covenants with the tenantry will be respected and completed. Under a lease, properly adjusted, mutual obligations are so expressed

as to remove all ambiguity and room for difference. In Scotland our courts do not deal with "equity" as in England, and we have no parallel for "tenant right," which, unhappily for Ireland, supplies material for endless and irritating controversy. I cannot help viewing the objections which many of our southern neighbours have to the system of granting leases as in a great measure unmeaning, but it is satisfactory to know that all do not share them. There is no name which stands higher among agriculturists than the Duke of Richmond's; and since he became, some years ago, one of our great territorial landowners, he has completely adopted the system, and in its best form. His farms are valued by a competent agent, having regard to the mutual interests of the contracting parties. He provides suitable buildings, fences, and arterial drainage, and gives encouragement on reasonable terms for aiding and securing substantial and permanent improvements. His Grace is supplying another example which I wish had been shown to us earlier, by planting great tracts of country more adapted for timber than for corn, thus providing shelter and other attendant advantages. He is much too honest and wise a man not to have discovered the unfairness and shortsightedness of letting his farms to the highest bidder. It is impossible for a tenant who is overrented to exhibit the

qualities of a spirited farmer. Everybody knows that a rack-rented farm hardly ever presents a flourishing appearance. A bad name gets attached to it; and if the landlord during the currency of the lease does receive the stipulated rents, he must know well enough that this is only effected by a cruel withdrawal of the tenant's capital.

Farming operations have been immensely aided by improvements in the implements in daily use. The ploughs, carts, harrows, and rollers that our fathers were familiar with, are valuable now only as antiquarian remains, and make us pity the men who were compelled to employ them. The sickle has mostly given way to the scythe, and the weary flail to the threshing machine, to the profit of every laird and tenant in the kingdom. We have to thank one Andrew Meikle for this last service, whose mechanical ingenuity was suitably rewarded by a pecuniary contribution, sufficient to render his old age comfortable and serene. We are now promised steam ploughs and reaping machines, which, if found to answer expectations, must still further revolutionize the details of country life.

We have escaped in great measure from the annoyances of "thirlage" and "knaveships," than which nothing could well have been more unreasonable and intolerable. "Thirlage" established an

espionage that all men detest. Not only were we bound to grind our corn at the mill of the dominant estate, but in many cases a certain tithe had to be so paid upon the whole of our cereal crops. The prevalence of the custom gave rise to endless disputes, and the miller was nearly as unpopular as the excise-man. We therefore hailed with satisfaction that act of parliament which puts the means of easy deliverance in our power, by having the value of these feudal burdens assessed, and commuted into a fixed yearly money payment.

There is a grievance, still unredressed, which our tenantry have begun to call oppressive, and which the commercial world lustily denounces. That is the law of hypothec. Under it landowners possess extraordinary privileges in competition with the general creditors of the tenant. It has existed, I believe, for more than two centuries, and its very antiquity is a *primâ facie* reason for its revisal. Agriculture has been so completely engrafted on our commerce, that no efforts should be left untried to impart to all transactions connected with it the elements of simplicity and security. As the law now stands, neither of these objects, in the matters of buying and selling, is attainable. A tenant's crop for an indefinite period remains liable to be attached for rent, to the gross injustice of *bonâ fide* purchasers. It is argued that

the continued existence of the right is requisite for protecting the interests of landlords; that in the cases of small tenants and capitalists it provides them with a fund of credit by which they are permitted to make market of the crop before being called upon to pay rent; and that were it swept away from the statute book, competition for this description of holdings would be vastly diminished or entirely cease. But the days of exceptional legislation have long been doomed; and if rent-rolls are to be maintained after such a fashion, it is time some change should take place. Even should a collapse ensue, its effects would be temporary, and things would right themselves. There cannot be a doubt that the law requires considerable modification.

Rent day occurring twice a year, was usually an occasion of anxiety, and always of interest. Our coffers stood in sore need of replenishing; and those seasons of scarcity which overtook the nation soon after the estate became mine made the process a difficult one. In the shape of rent, money payments at that period often bore a small proportion to the whole. Large quantities of oatmeal were delivered at our "girnals." Many services were performed in the interests of the laird, and endless arrivals of poultry of all descriptions helped to keep starvation at a distance. Purses, mostly represented

by worsted stockings of great antiquity, or pocket handkerchiefs, which on other high occasions were devoted to the personal service of man and wife indiscriminately, odoriferous of tobacco smoke and whisky, contained the carefully-preserved treasure, which was counted out and placed on the table before me. The smaller tenants rarely possessed paper money, and their payments were in silver and copper only. All of them, even in fair times, claimed the privilege on "rent day" of pouring forth their sorrows, and to the uninitiated these would have disclosed a lamentable state of things. Some had lost their best cows—it is always the best that die—death had snatched away horses. Frost had attacked the cereal crops; and, followed by the contributions of Jupiter Pluvius, they had barely escaped total destruction. Years had elapsed since many of them had been able to procure one new article of clothing; and then children had multiplied with ruinous rapidity. Under the mask of doleful countenances, and eyes brimful of tears, such were the representations addressed to me; and if, in my early experience, they extorted pity and relief, careful investigation revealed the existence of romantic exaggeration, and my heart was hardened. If dull care really existed, it was quickly drowned by that substantial repast which immemorial practice

associated with the conclusion of the day's proceedings, and those liberal allowances of home-brewed ale and whisky punch, which possess attractions that never fail. Long faces and affecting details were discarded till the return of another convenient season.

Not always fall of leaf, nor ever spring,
Not endless night, nor yet eternal day;
The saddest birds a season find to sing,
The roughest storm a calm may soon allay.

There was not only this habit of complaining, but another quite as strong, evidenced in an anxiety to become the laird's bankers. One of my tenants was unusually well off, though he luxuriated in the simulation of poverty. Instead of paying his rent at the conventional terms, he used to dole it out in small instalments during the year, at arbitrary intervals, as if to give a colour to the difficulties which surrounded its realization; and I could account for this habit on no other ground than a constitutional affection for the coin, and an anxiety to be the possessor of it for as long a period as possible. Fatigued at length by the narrative of his grievances and the trouble he imposed upon me, I spoke sharply, and claimed immediate payment of what he owed. Then he assumed a most dolorous tone, dwelt on the impossibility of complying with my demand,


and darkly hinted at the consequences of an enforced settlement.

Not a sou had he got, not a guinea or note,
And he looked most confoundedly flurried.

But as I remained firm, he felt that further resistance would be unavailing, and so went his way, grumbling as he went, that from my "nae doot being in sair want o' the siller," he would ask a neighbour to lend it him. Of course this friendly neighbour was a myth. My friend left the house, and was seen to seek the shelter of a retired corner, and furtively to extract from the recesses of an inner pocket the sum which sufficed for my claim. On his return, after an absence sufficiently long as he considered for the transaction of the loan, I was gravely informed that his appeal had not been made in vain. He thought it consistent to add that he should attend me on an early day to resign his lease. This promised visit was never paid. He ceased to grumble, and went on prosperously to the end.

No hap so hard, but may in time amend !

The closing years of the century were full of gloom, and the aspect of things portended increased evil. Napoleon had already shown himself the mightiest antagonist with whom king or kaiser had ever wrestled, and yet the minister was constantly



predicting his immediate downfall. Only a few weeks before the battle of Marengo, Mr. Pitt assured the House of Commons that, such was the beggared condition of the French exchequer, although he could not name the day, he might venture to specify the week, when this collapse must take place. The wisest statesmen expose human weakness when they occupy prophetic ground. The prediction proved singularly untrue, for during fifteen years more this impoverished government of France successfully carried on struggles of the most gigantic kind, and London alone excepted, its tricolour was planted in the proudest capitals of Europe. Immense political excitement prevailed in many parts of Scotland. Numerous trials for sedition took place, and the indecorous, partial, and intemperate demeanour of the judges, who were bent only on conviction, prostituted for a season the temple of Justice, and aroused nearly to madness the passions of the people. The brutality of Jeffreys in England, more than a century before, had stamped out seditious practices there, but the exhibitions with which we had become familiar only helped to prolong their vitality; and evidence of this would undoubtedly have been supplied, had not other matters of absorbing interest meanwhile arrested and diverted public attention. The harvest of 1794 had utterly failed, and was

followed by a dearth throughout the land, so calamitous, that the horrors of famine came upon us with fearful reality. Edinburgh at that time had a population of about ninety thousand, and of these eleven thousand were supported by the hand of charity. In other places the destitution was on the same scale, and the scarcity and its effects were felt through 1795 and 1796. Proclamations were issued recommending the consumption of a limited quantity of bread for every household, according to its members, and we then became acquainted with that other curious proclamation for "setting the assize of bread," by which its price was fixed under the authority of the magistracy within burghs and counties. Those who had the misfortune to trade in corn were especially selected as the objects of popular ill-will, and their lives were not unfrequently exposed to imminent peril. If they escaped personal injury, their windows were doomed to inevitable destruction, as each new exciting cause presented itself. These were the days when "forestalling" and "regrating" were punishable as crimes, and of restrictions on the freedom of trade, which were ridiculous as well as oppressive. Such things were convincing proofs that up to this period the 'Wealth of Nations,' published twenty years previously, had exerted no influence whatever upon public opinion.

Between 1780 and 1800, several regiments, since become famous, were raised through the exertions of persons of authority; and I am proud to recollect that men in the north of Scotland held a conspicuous place in these patriotic efforts. We owe the 72nd and 78th to the Earl of Seaforth (a title since extinct); the 90th to the brave Lord Lynedoch; the 92nd to the Marquis of Huntly, afterwards Duke of Gordon; and the 93rd to the Sutherland family.

CHAPTER V.

SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLMASTERS, CHURCHES AND
PARSONS, UNIVERSITIES AND PROFESSORS.

I SHOULD be ashamed to let a word escape which could imply anything like disrespect for our *plan* of parochial teaching, and I cheerfully acknowledge the obligations that we owe to our parish schools; but I can't help thinking that had fitter instruments been oftentimes selected, the wise system on which they were established was capable of producing still larger beneficial results. By law, one half of the schoolmaster's salary is payable by the tenantry of each parish. That salary is very small, the *maximum* being 34*l.* odd, and in many cases it alternates between this and the *minimum* of 17*l.*; but the enforced nature of the contributions has had the most salutary effect. Of all people in the world our countrymen are the loathest to give away their money without some reasonable *quid pro quo*; and our

tenants would consider themselves idiotic if, having contributed towards the teacher's income, they did not send to school as many olive-branches as possible to represent the impost thus laid upon them. It is true that for each child separate fees have to be paid—very moderate in amount—but that is entirely another question. The tax has somehow or another to be resented, and the parents select the wise plan of sending their children to school. Although the schoolmaster owes his appointment to the owners of land of a certain valued rent and upwards, and to the clergyman of the parish, no man so selected can enter upon the duties of his office until he has been examined and certified as duly qualified by the "presbytery of the bounds." I am forced to say that this certificate of fitness has too frequently been given when it ought to have been withheld; and a great miscarriage of justice has followed, to the detriment of those who would otherwise have had the advantage of efficient teaching. The clergy, who had the remedy in their own hands, refused to apply it, lest they should bring themselves into uncomfortable collision with the lay patrons. When the Act was passed it might have been reasonable, as well as wise, to invest the clergyman and larger proprietors only with the right of appointment; but according to the spirit of the times in which we live,

when we are popularizing our institutions, it seems inconsistent that the choice should rest with so limited a body. The country now contains men—neither lairds nor parsons—representing important and vested interests in every parish whose education and intelligence amply qualify them; and an increased constituency is less likely to be swayed in its selection by a regard to mere personal favour irrespective of personal fitness. It is to be regretted that parish schoolmasters have not more generally regarded teaching as a separate and distinct profession, to which they should permanently attach themselves. By far too many of them view it as only a temporary occupation, preparatory to their obtaining preferment in the Kirk. There are men no doubt occasionally to be found who are able to devote all the energies of their mind to whatever work they are for the moment engaged in, but this capacity is of the rarest occurrence; and therefore it is thought that those who look forward at the earliest possible period in their power to being liberated from what they feel to be the drudgery of teaching, are not the men whom we should place in the superintendence of our parish schools. To be successful in any employment, a man's heart must be fully engaged, and that engagement ought to be contracted early in life. It is often the case that a teacher does not

reach the goal of his ambition before middle life, and the chances of his becoming an efficient parish priest are proved to be decidedly against him. Thus both the school and the Kirk are badly served.

It has become so entirely the custom to praise our parochial system, that I doubt if our southern neighbours are aware how scantily it has been provided for. I have already named the rate of pecuniary remuneration; but until 1803 no house accommodation was supplied by law to cover the teacher's head. Mr. Charles Hope, the Lord-Advocate, and better known afterwards as our Lord-President, carried a bill through parliament which made it compulsory on landowners to build a school-house containing *two* rooms, *including* a kitchen! and when rallied on the sumptuousness of his measure, he used to say that he had the utmost difficulty in carrying it, as our Scotch senators indignantly exclaimed that they had no idea of providing "palaces for dominies." Up to the time I write that Act has received no enlargement, and the teacher is wholly dependent on the caprice of the heritors of his parish.

There are many indications that the office of parish schoolmaster will by-and-by be better worth the ambition of educated men. Several persons who have perceived what benefits the system is capable of

conferring, and remembered the low scale of remuneration, have, in later years, left large sums to form a fund for supplementing the incomes of these teachers. The annual distribution of revenue thence arising is made at the discretion of the trustees of the testators, who are authorized to bestow or withhold the benefits, according to circumstances and the report of official inspectors. A wholesome correction has thus been applied in several counties, inasmuch as appointments are now made with greater care and disinterestedness, while from the increased incomes created a superior class of candidates begin to present themselves; but it is much to be regretted that these schools should not be thrown open to teachers of other religious denominations than the Established Church. There is not a doubt that in past days many of our schoolmasters have been shamefully ignorant; and as educated men have more than a common horror of banishment, one could not reasonably have expected to find such in those isolated, distant, and thinly-populated localities, where the stipend was seventeen pounds, and the house accommodation, for a wife and perhaps half a score children, "two rooms, including a kitchen!"

Of those who started life as parish schoolmasters, by far the most remarkable, within my memory, were James Macpherson and James Beattie. It

was long a vexed question whether Macpherson was or was not a charlatan. I make no pretensions to unravel the mystery, but the erudite, I believe, have come to the conclusion that he was an audacious impostor. However that may be, his writings were received with immense enthusiasm, and raised among antiquarians and literary men such a war of controversy as has seldom been equalled. Macpherson's statement was, that in frequent journeys through the Highlands, he had got access to and accumulated a large collection of ancient fragmentary poetry in the Erse dialect. Translations of these he published, and claimed for them the authorship of Ossian. In the "far north" especially they were considered genuine, and it was generally asserted there that many of the persons, descriptions, and events mentioned in them, had been familiar to the people of the country as the legends of their youth. Of southern critics who vehemently disputed their authenticity, the most conspicuous was Dr. Johnson, and Macpherson increased prevailing suspicions by refusing to submit to inspection the original manuscripts. His subsequent translations were 'Fingal' and 'Temora,' which he likewise attributed to our Celtic Homer. Their appearance revived former discussions; and an increased belief in the spurious nature of the whole was the consequence. Never-

theless, the utmost popular favour attended their publication, which was not confined to our own country, but extended to all the states of Europe. Macpherson prospered greatly, never revealed his secret, and became a member of parliament.

Mr. Beattie, who rose to be professor of moral philosophy and logic at Aberdeen, was the author of the poems, 'The Judgment of Paris,' and 'The Minstrel,' which, as well as his 'Essay on Truth,' attracted wide attention, and will continue to find for him a place among the many eminent persons who have signalized themselves in the pursuit of literature.

Every rural parish, with hardly an exception, has its Sunday school. In our larger towns, schools founded upon the Madras and Lancasterian systems have been productive of the best results, and secure the means of education on easy terms. The Free Church hopes to establish a plan as general as that of the Kirk; and now in populous communities, offers are made to children of the poorest parents, by whom they have either been abandoned or neglected, not of education merely, but of food, and frequently of industrial training. "Ragged schools" have already reclaimed thousands from an idle, degraded, and wicked life. The merit of gaining for them prominent notice belongs to Sheriff Watson, who opened the first at Aberdeen, in 1841. Upheld by

an earnest philanthropy, which neither supineness nor opposition on the part of others was able to repress, and by an active devotion, beyond all praise, he has found his reward in the wonderful success of his project, and its adoption throughout the United Kingdom; while by the eloquent and passionate appeals of Mr. Guthrie, next to Chalmers the most distinguished for oratory of Presbyterian divines, these schools have excited the greatest interest, and exercise the widest influence for good.

The "parsons" of the Kirk have been more remarkable for exceptional, than general, ability. I am using the term in the sense of Sir William Blackstone, who says, "The appellation of a 'parson,' however it may be depreciated by familiar, clownish, and indiscriminate use, is the most legal, most beneficial, and most honourable title that a parish priest can enjoy, because such a one, and he only, is said, *Vicem seu parsonam ecclesie genere*." In former times the clerical body held commanding influence. The Church was then the only receptacle of learning, and the greatest offices in the state were often filled by its professional members. When Presbytery was established, ecclesiastics ceased to be dignitaries, for Calvinism recognizes no degrees of rank; but the persecutions which subsequently prevailed, and the heroic spirit that was exhibited, gave

them a hold on the respect and affections of the people such as neither great worldly preferment nor wealth could have secured, and which generations did not efface. The revolution put an end to their troubles, and parish clergymen were suffered to discharge their functions in peace and without restraint. Education, as it became more diffused, helped to lessen that peculiar authority which their absorption of the learning of the country had previously conferred; and at a later period their abandonment of all sympathy with the popular opposition to patronage did much to destroy what remained of their ancient historic glory. Except as a political institution, the landed aristocracy care little for the Kirk. Few of them, comparatively, are members of it, and the society of its ministers is tolerated, rather than cultivated by them. Sydney Smith has an amusing summary of a charge of Dr. Blomfield to his clergy, when he held a provincial see. A good deal of it would be acceptable enough to our own parish priests, and the concluding portion too, I daresay, had they the power, which they lack, of propitiating "the squire." The Bishop is made to say,

Hunt not, fish not, shoot not,
Dance not, fiddle not, flute not;
Whate'er you do, eschew the Whigs,
And stay at home and mind the pigs.
And above all it is my particular desire
That at least once a week you dine with the squire!

It seldom happens that sons of country gentlemen or successful merchants make the Kirk a profession; and if there are many people who tell you that a "church which is poor, resident, and working, is the best of all churches," I doubt its fitness to sustain, as things are now, a position which is sufficiently independent and elevated. The smallness of the livings, on the one hand, and the increased pecuniary advantages held out in all secular engagements, on the other, have attracted to it men of inferior social rank, whose education, often imperfect, has been acquired under difficulties, and whose knowledge of the world has necessarily been circumscribed and pedantic. Such men coming into daily contact with lay members of their congregations, possessing accomplishments often greater, and with views more enlightened, naturally follow where they would have been expected to lead; and instead of establishing that position for themselves, and upholding it by the authority which learning, piety, and refinement can alone secure, they have too frequently been contented with an obsequious allegiance to their patrons, and a cold and formal discharge of their official duties.

If, during the last quarter of a century, the exceptions have been comparatively few, some of them have at least been striking. Sir Harry "the Wild"

has long since left us, but his mantle fell upon successors who, sharing his principles, have revived the spirit of the clergy and engrafted on numbers of their comrades high and noble aspirations. The moderate party, in these years, has no doubt had able generals, and such men as Inglis, Cook, and MacFarlane were well adapted to be its chiefs; but their faculties of speech have been dimmed before the vigorous intellect, the acute reasoning, and admirable debating powers of Andrew Thomson, and the luminous exposition and unrivalled eloquence of Chalmers.

In every fold a few black sheep are to be found; and I am forced to declare that our Scottish Establishment long retained some clergy in hers who ought to have received no such shelter. Clerical scandals are inexcusable; and unless the cause of them is removed, do Churchmen not see how largely dissent is thus fostered, not to mention the encouragement which they supply to those who scoff at all religion? I scarcely allude to that state of things which, in the greatest part of my time, has not been uncommon in the North, where the free use of fermented liquors has received no discountenance from the ministers of the Gospel. This fact, too many hundreds of living men can attest; and the *orgies* (a milder term would be inapplicable) which used to disgrace the social parties at our manses, especially on "Meikle Mon-

day," implicated such numbers, that, had cognizance been taken of them in the Church courts, few members of Presbytery could have exclaimed, "These hands are clean."

Within the same county where I reside there lived a parish priest, still well remembered there, who, not a great many years ago, when dining at his patron's table, got engaged in some controversy, which quickly led to the exchange of high words and strong expressions. There followed, no doubt, a great deal of personal recrimination; and at length the laird, who had been a soldier in his youth, and was impatient of contradiction, intimated that but for the colour of his guest's coat, he should inflict upon him corporal punishment. The divine, with a zeal which in a nobler cause would have been commendable, removed the garment which was the alleged reason of the impediment, and bade his host "Come on!" Thus invited, it would have been poltroonery to refuse. In consequence, a smart and sanguinary encounter took place, which was courageously and even artistically conducted, to the utter discomfiture, at last, of the layman, who, in the most humiliating of fashions, was ejected from the halls of his ancestors. Never had the truthfulness of the adage been more gloriously established:

Cedunt arma togæ!

The affair caused some passing scandal in the parish, and, on the whole, popular sympathy was on the side of the victor. His parishioners seemed to entertain increased respect for the ability of their spiritual instructor. "What a clever cheil," said one of them, "our parson is; he gets drunk and thrashes the laird on Saturday night, and preaches a grand discourse on the Sabbath!" At last, the gods, jealous of the longer possession by mankind of this parish priest, took him unto themselves, and a funeral sermon must be preached on the occasion. The office devolved on a neighbouring divine, and for once the old kirk was crowded. Sermons of this description lose all their interest if they do not portray the leading features of the character of the deceased, and to indulge in bare generalities is altogether out of place; and yet the orator failed to do anything besides. Often a hope was raised, only doomed to disappointment, that he was about to terminate his weary platitudes and come to the point. He felt that some reference was necessary, and his shyness in making an approach was transparent. It was not till the closing sentence of the dullest of funereal discourses that he magnanimously did so, and in these impressive words: "And what shall we say of our departed brother—but that he lived, and that he dee'd, and that—he's dead?"

I am reminded of several of our clergy, who,

if not all distinguished as divines, have left behind them traces of their philanthropy, or been otherwise known to fame. I do not seek for them except among my own contemporaries.

Dr. Robert Wallace, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, has placed both his professional brethren and learned professors under deep obligations. To him they are notably indebted for the scheme of the "Ministers' Widows' Fund," which secures annuities and allowances for the widows and children of all who have livings in the Kirk and chairs in our Universities. Oddly enough, he was Moderator when the General Assembly finally approved the plan, which, by his continued efforts, soon afterwards received legislative sanction. Dr. Wallace's calculations, which form the chief basis of it, have stood the test of experience for eighty years, and witness to his science and ability.

Dr. Thomas Blacklock is a singular instance of the successful attainment of literary distinction under the misfortune of deprivation of sight. He was presented to a living; but the parishioners keenly opposed his settlement, and after two years' contention he retired to Edinburgh, its University consoling him with the degree of Doctor in Divinity. Besides other works, he published some volumes of poems, which were well received. As a linguist he had a

deserved reputation; and he is said to have made considerable progress in the sciences. He mixed in the society of many of our celebrities, who both loved and honoured him. I daresay he shocked some of his more rigid brethren by his intimacy with David Hume. Burns, who was another of his friends, has immortalized him in song—

Wow but your letter made me vauntie !
 And are ye hale and weel and cauntie ?
 I kenn'd it still your wee bit jauntie
 Wad bring ye to :
 Lord send you aye as weel 's I want ye,
 And then ye'll do.

My compliments to Sister Beckie ;
 And eke the same to honest Lucky ;
 I wat she is a dainty chuckie
 As e'er tread clay !
 And gratefully, my guid auld cockie,
 I'm yours for aye.

Dr. Andrew Bell founded that peculiar plan of elementary education called the "Madras System," from the fact of his holding official employment in Madras, where he first developed it. Joseph Lancaster put forward rival claims; but I believe it is generally admitted that to Bell, the country, and emphatically, the poorer classes, are primarily indebted for the blessings which it has conferred. In all quarters of the globe the "Madras System" is

now successfully established. He found a fitting resting-place in our noble Abbey of Westminster, where a monument records his singular sagacity and benevolence.*

Another who held preferment in the Kirk was John Home, renowned as the author of the popular play of 'Douglas.' Garrick had been offered the manuscript, but declined it; whereupon Mr. Home made arrangements that its representation should take place on the boards of the Edinburgh Theatre. That a parson should write a play was bad enough, that he should appear in public and countenance its being acted was scandalous in the highest degree. So thought the magnates of the Kirk, and Home, being threatened with ecclesiastical censures, discarded his Geneva gown, and renounced for ever all its privileges. He lived to a green old age, and often joined that interesting circle which comprised the great names of Adam Smith, David Hume, Ferguson, and Black.

Doctor Skene Keith was a parish minister in the North, and wrote for the Board of Agriculture a published account of the art as practised in all its branches in the stirring shire of Aberdeen. He had no eminence as a theologian, but was great on all

* My venerable friend is mistaken here. Dr. Bell, although a Scotchman by birth and parentage, belonged to the Church of England, and died a Prebendary of Westminster.—ED.

questions of manuring and top-dressing. The pulpit possessed many constellations of a higher order, and there he soared not above ordinary mortals; but his brethren waned before him on every subject which touched on the improvement of waste land, the drainage of bogs, or the rearing and feeding of cattle. This was the popular opinion of his position, although the Doctor himself considered that he was not without claims to professional distinction. At the conclusion of services which he had conducted much to his own satisfaction, he is said to have asked a favourite elder what he thought of them. "Troth, Doctor," replied Lofty, "I like you better in the bottle than in the wood." His sound sense and worldly sagacity were far beyond the common allowance, and kept him nearly always right, while his fund of anecdote and native humour made his conversation agreeable and entertaining. A sort of constitutional restlessness was constantly carrying him about the country; and that curious figure was familiarly recognized in most parts of it between Edinburgh and Inverness. All his journeys were on foot. I doubt if Skene Keith ever condescended to occupy a place on a stage-coach after the *luxury* was in his power. His friends were the people of the country. He visited everywhere, and everybody greeted him cordially, in "castle, hall, house, manse, hut, hovel, sheiling." It

is curious to turn to his 'Agricultural Survey,' as he calls it, on account of changes which near half a century has produced. There were few *fat* cattle in our part of the world then. "Cattle-dealing," however, was an important calling. The county of Aberdeen alone received 150,000*l.* yearly for cattle sent southward; and a neighbour of the Doctor's sold 8,000 head annually, but they were grazing beasts, and *driven* from the North for sale in the English markets. Those only were tied up to fatten which sufficed for local demand. There is one ox in particular of which the Doctor is vastly proud, and he invites the public to contemplate his obesity and proportions. No showman could have been more graphically in describing the properties of his Bengal tiger than the divine when dwelling on the good points of Northern steers. We can fancy hearing him say, "Ladies and gentlemen, do look at this fine stot—only *eight* years old, and weighing one hundred and fifteen stones English—sinking offals!" We have no bucolic Methuselahs now-a-days, and if we had he would be a bold man to predict to what weight they might not attain when subjected to the scientific feeding of our great butchers at Aberdeen. In his 'Survey' the Doctor diverges for a chapter to discourse on "gardens, hot walls, and orchards." On that subject he is decidedly very dry; and in his days

the north-east of Scotland afforded few opportunities for improving this kind of knowledge. There are some gardens, he informs us, that have been laid out in the suburbs of his county town ; and he dwells with astonishment on the fact that there—in the fifty-eighth degree of north latitude—the productions of a warmer climate should be seen growing artificially. How delightful it must be, he adds, for the merchant within easy walking distance from his counting-house to find this condition of things !

Luctantem Icariis fluctibus Africum,
Mercator metuens, etiam et oppidi,
Laudat rura sui !

His son, Doctor Alexander Keith—one of the most amiable of mankind—has written the ‘Evidence of Prophecy,’ a work which, passing through numerous editions, has been translated into the language of many of the Courts of Europe, and has given its author high rank among living divines.

To Dr. Duncan, the minister of Ruthwell in Dumfriesshire, belongs the high merit of putting into practical form the idea of “Savings Banks.” In 1810 he founded one in his parish ; and although he had to contend against strong prejudices on the part of the people, his efforts were so far successful, and they paved the way for those numerous institutions which now exist, to the incalculable advantage

of the working classes. That absurd and hazardous system of hoarding has disappeared. Government intervention has provided the amplest security to depositors, who have long since appreciated the benefits which these banks afford in the days of sickness, non-employment, and old age.

The nation is much indebted to the genius of my excellent friend, Mr. Forsyth, the minister of Belhelvie in Aberdeenshire, who has invented the percussion-cap, now in universal use, to the utter confusion and annihilation of the ancient flint. The professional defenders of the country and every sportsman in it should be alike grateful. Government, while they have acknowledged the merits of the invention, have been stingy in the measure of rewarding it; and I fear that after years of busy and anxious research this ingenious gentleman finds himself not a richer, but a poorer man. But if those in high authority have meanly requited him, he must have been more than compensated for the disappointment in having his claims to public gratitude recognized by the *Senatus Academicus* of the neighbouring University, which conferred on him its degree of Doctor of Divinity!

The "fine arts" have a distinguished clerical representative. The Rev. John Thomson, of Dudingstone, assisted to proclaim Edinburgh as one of

their seats. His landscapes may not bear comparison with those of Nasmyth, but they are works which have raised his name to deserved eminence, and contributed to excite public attention to a branch of art which fifty years ago was rarely talked about in ordinary social circles.

I desire to speak of a provincial minister, with whom I was familiarly acquainted, who was neither a great divine nor a learned man. He was eminently a popular preacher, and his style was so charged with eccentricity, or rather his habit of saying odd and sensational things from the pulpit was such, that for nearly half a century no church in the town of Aberdeen was so crowded as Doctor Kidd's. The Doctor was a pluralist, although probably more from necessity than choice. The emoluments arising from his church preferment were very small, and he filled the Hebrew chair in Marischal College and University. I believe the Kirk possesses few ripe Hebrew scholars. Our professor was certainly not one of them; and it would have been singular indeed if, through his teaching, those who sat at his feet had attained any eminence in this department. His own University, contrary to its usual plan, had not conferred upon him the coveted degree of Doctor of Divinity—for which he was indebted to some sympathizing Transatlantic institution—but the “*profanum*

vulgar" did not value him the less on this account, if indeed they knew, or cared, whence the prefix was derived. It was in the pulpit of his "Chapel of Ease," where his fame culminated—as we call in Scotland that sort of church, belonging to the Establishment, to which is attached a boundary that is only *quoad sacra*. There he was indeed "facile princeps," and in the eyes of his congregation left far away in the distance all competitors for their favour. It was his "lectures" which chiefly attracted attention. Not confining himself to a single text of Scripture, he selected several verses, or a chapter, which supplied him with a wider range and ample scope for lively and somewhat erratic dissertation. He never wearied to discourse on the sins of the world, and on the wickedness of the human heart. "So rotten is it," he is said to have observed on one occasion, "that it exceeds the rottenness of my friend John Cadenhead's potatoes,"—a valued "elder" of his, engaged in the sale of that esculent, whose trade ever afterwards suffered a serious decline from the possible truthfulness of the simile in which his pastor had indulged. The Book of Daniel had been selected as the course of a winter's lectures; and one evening he was contributing a glowing description of the great feast of "Belshazzar the King." He described, with thrilling interest, how the fingers of

a man's hand came forth, and wrote certain words upon the wall ; with what consternation and alarm the King beheld all this, and the relief which was communicated to him by the suggestion of the Queen, that the captive Israelite should be sent for. The lecturer went on to inform his flock that presently a knock was heard at the door, and that the monarch made the familiar inquiry, " Who's there ? " " It's Daniel, O King," answered the prophet. " Walk in, Mr. Daniel ; I am very happy to see you. What will you have ? port or sherry ? " " A tumbler, O King ! " was the prompt reply—a choice which it was well known would have been the Doctor's own. I do not stop to comment on the character of this episode ; but Kidd had always been a privileged person, and what would have been intolerable in another only contributed to the peculiar popularity which he had acquired. His congregational influence was immense, for he was utterly unselfish and unworldly. He had a rough manner and speech, but no man had a warmer or more sympathizing heart. His " lectures " were not always confined to religious topics, but occasionally reached the contemporary fashions in dress, some of which he almost anathematized. Nothing made the Doctor so wrathful as to see his hearers giving way to somnolency. " If you won't hear the word, at

least you shall feel it," said he, to one sleepy member, and, suiting the action to the speech, made so good a shot, that this modern Eutychus was effectually cured of an evil habit. Dr. Kidd was a persistent unbeliever in the conversion of Jews. A hypocritical Israelite had for some time imposed upon him, until the hollowness of his profession was discovered and exposed. He was furious at being taken in, and when reliable instances were afterwards adduced of men who claimed to be proselytes, he used to give an incredulous shake of his head, and say, "Time will tell." The Doctor's well-known figure has disappeared from the midst of us, and in the sphere in which he moved never were the regrets which accompanied him to the grave more numerous, sincere, and affectionate.

There was another Presbyterian divine, whose fame as a preacher was not local, but wide-spread. It was impossible to deny to Edward Irving the possession of a noble and vigorous intellect, or to dispute that in his works of philanthropy and missionary labour he was influenced by other than the loftiest inspirations; although the world was often more prone to brand him as a fanatic and enthusiast, than to dwell on his commanding professional gifts. He had a power of handling subjects and of enforcing his opinions in language which belonged to oratory


of the highest order. In the early part of his career in Scotland his discourses attracted little attention ; but in the pulpit of the Caledonian Church in London he established a reputation as a preacher which had never before been approached. He became a fashion. Those high-born dames who represented the exclusiveness of Almack's, grave judges, philosophers and statesmen, all swelled the weekly throng ; and among the number none was more devoted in his admiration than the brilliant and versatile Canning, who had studied Cicero and Demosthenes with success, and had listened to the best efforts of Pitt and Fox, Burke and Sheridan. To have attractions for such a man, Irving's eloquence must have been of no spurious kind ; and it was in truth often splendid and sublime. I wish it were possible to dissociate from his name those strange wanderings and vagaries which took possession of his mind whilst it seemed to be in the meridian of its power, and he was in the zenith of his usefulness. The air of London would appear to exert a catching influence on Scotch preachers settled there, at least in the matter of *prophecy*. Irving soon became deep in the study of it, and announced that the second personal advent of our Saviour was near at hand. In his opinion, too, the period of miraculous agency had not passed away, and that queer form of

speech, called the "unknown tongue," was adopted by him, in which, by supernatural means, the tongue of man was used "in a manner which neither his own intellect could dictate nor that of any other man comprehend." There were other views which he advocated, so peculiar in their substance and tendency, that it became incumbent on our church courts to interfere. His heresies were too plain to be disputed, and the General Assembly, a few years ago, and shortly before his death, deposed him from his office. He has left a reputation, however, which places him in the foremost rank of "great preachers;" and his disciples, who revere his memory, and call themselves collectively the "Apostolic Catholic Church," are to be found in some numbers in the United Kingdom, in America, and in several of the continental states.

But the greatest luminary which "Presbytery" has yet beheld is Thomas Chalmers. No wonder we are proud of him! The simplicity of his daily life—the delightful frankness of his address, and his rare benevolence of countenance—attract us to the man; while his enlightened philosophy, noble philanthropic efforts, and astonishing gifts of oratory, command the admiration of all. The younger Pitt might have envied the magnificence of his periods, while the intensity and energy of expression which


attend his words show that they have taken root in his very soul. There he stands, in his Geneva gown, the personification of all that is grand and noble in intellect! Aristocratic Oxford has not disdained to confer upon him a degree; and that illustrious order, into which the proudest of English prelates have often sighed in vain for admission, the Institute of France, has enrolled him as a member. I do not dwell on the leading position which he occupied in relation to those debates and that line of policy which preceded and precipitated the "disruption," because, although they tended still further to exalt him in the estimation of his own party, his views failed to receive a general concurrence. But long previously he had established a lasting renown by the splendour of his pulpit eloquence, his devotion to the daily duties of a parish clergyman in crowded and hitherto neglected communities, his eminence as a professor in two of our universities, and the great attraction of his literary works. The later period of his connexion with the Kirk was signalized by years of enthusiastic labour in the field of church extension, which produced the magnificent sum of 300,000*l.*, and gave to it more than two hundred new places of worship.

The General Assembly continues to present a curious agglomeration. Our parsons in large bodies



make an annual pilgrimage from the provinces to its meetings, to testify fealty to the Kirk, zeal for the best interests of the nation, and devotion to their leaders. Not that they are insensible, all the while, to the good things of this life, and to the amusements which Edinburgh then supplies, some of them specially on their account. The dinners of the Lord High Commissioner are leading objects of interest, and the marvellous rapidity with which not only the "delicacies of the season," but the more substantial viands disappear thereat, is proof alike that clericals are not indifferent to the gastronomic science, and of the excellence of presbyterian digestion. Sage judges, although not so often as formerly, take part in the debates, and advocates and writers to the signet constitute another portion of the lay members. A stray peer occasionally graces the convocation, if he does not always contribute wisdom to its deliberations; and the sprinkling which one sees of blue coats and buff waistcoats, proclaims the presence of some representatives of my own class who have not yet abandoned the fashion of hair powder and pigtails. In all questions which demand the assistance of gentlemen of the long robe, the professional services of Patrick Robertson are sure to be retained. The driest subjects are enlivened by his racy humour, and those piquant and droll

observations which are always at his disposal possess an influence so irresistible that they arouse from a condition of protracted dormancy the risible faculties of the most prim and puritan. For many years, under a Tory dynasty, the representative of the crown was the premier baron of Scotland, the gallant and distinguished chief of the powerful clan of the Forbes's. Except that he was not a member of the Kirk, no better man could have been found for the office. His striking presence and noble bearing lent dignity to the assembly, and his courtly and affable manners gained for him universal deference and esteem. He was attended by a purse-bearer, attired in velvet suit, to whom nature had likewise been very gracious, and in whose veins one might have fancied there flowed the gentle blood of some Norman baron. Not that his birth was mean, for he could connect his descent with that of the famous prelate of the reign of William and Mary whose family have dwelt for six centuries on the banks of the Dee, always liked and always respected, never more than now, as the Lairds and Baronets of Leys. There are some people—by no means the worst of mankind—who are spoken of as if all the world were Quakers. The purse-bearer is one of them, and although “Tom Burnett” is only a country writer, he is not an ordinary specimen of the genus. He



has moved all his life in the best society. To William the Fourth he was personally and favourably known, and the king was said occasionally to quote "Tom Burnett" as an authority on the affairs of his Scottish kingdom. Mr. Burnett is the friend and confidential adviser of Lord Aberdeen, who appreciates his sagacity, just as Lord Palmerston would his wit and genial humour.

It has not often happened that the proceedings of our Assembly attract much interest on the other side the Border. There has been little community of feeling between the churches, and even less among their ministers, although occasionally this difference has disappeared when questions of wider influence and absorbing national importance have presented themselves. So long ago as the early part of the century, one of those cases occurred which excited great attention on account of the principle involved in it, and the person whom it immediately concerned. The election of Playfair to the chair of natural philosophy had made a vacancy in that of mathematics, which the patrons—the town council—supplied by appointing Mr. John Leslie, who had already greatly distinguished himself in the scientific world, and whose subsequent career has increased the fame of the metropolitan university. The clergy of the dominant party had long been desirous of

strengthening their direct authority in our universities, and had already designed this professorship for one of their professional brethren. They asserted a right of veto on this and other nominations, relying on some conditions in the deed of foundation, and which, had it been conceded, would have been, in effect, to transfer the patronage of such chairs from the hands of lay patrons into their own. Perhaps from a feeling that this demand had no solid foundation to rest upon, and with an expectation that, were the election cancelled, some clerical brother might eventually be chosen, Leslie was next accused of open participation in certain monstrous heresies of David Hume, sufficient of course, had this complicity been established, to have justified the ecclesiastical courts in refusing to induct him.

The debate in the Assembly which the question raised was worthy of the intellectual fame of "Dunedin" in its best days. Only generals were actively engaged in the contest. Ranged on the side of Leslie were the Evangelicals and the Whigs, under the command of Sir Harry the Wild; while foremost among his opponents was the Lord President Campbell, backed by all the talent of moderate divines and Tory laymen. The president would have acted with more discretion had he not descended from his judicial post to assume the office

of a partizan, and he must have deeply repented his imprudence as he listened to the speeches of Dugald Stewart and Moncreiff, and those eminent members of his own bar by whom the fallacy of his arguments and the "baseless fabric" of his assertions were exposed with merciless logic. But the man who, during a discussion into which was imparted much bitterness of feeling and party spirit, affected the greatest horror of heretical taint, was that pious toper, Lord Hermand, whose address was concluded in these words—pronounced with the peculiar solemnity of tone and eccentricity of manner belonging to him—"Sir, I sucked in the being and attributes of God with my mother's milk!" The "*vox populi*," prone enough in general to be alarmed by the catching cry of atheism, was too shrewd to be misled in this instance, and readily suspected the covert grounds on which it had been raised. It protested against any extension of clerical power and influence, and in fact saved Leslie's cause. Many of the habitual supporters of the moderate side stayed away from the division, and so their leaders found themselves in the unprecedented and mortifying position of a minority.

Until thirty years afterwards the annual meetings of our General Assembly produced nothing to excite more than ordinary and passing notice, but in 1834

the dominant power of the "moderates" ceased, and the "evangelicals," who for half a century had vainly struggled for the ascendancy, ruled in their stead. The Act of Queen Anne for restoring patronage had been strenuously objected to at the time, as an interference with the guarantees of the revolution settlement, and had ever since been a source of strife within the Church. It had already occasioned dissent, and now it was about to lead to discussions momentous beyond all former precedent, whether as regarded the agitation created by them, or the portentous consequences which threatened to follow. Everybody who desires to be impartial must admit that there was often great abuse in the exercise of patronage, and that ministers totally unsuited for the office were forced upon the unwilling acceptance of many parishes. The "call," which was intended as a check upon the unworthy bestowal of it, had become, from the way in which its action was interpreted, of no practical utility; and the expressed consent of a "dribblet of a parish," as Dr. Chalmers termed it, was held, in the eye of the law, to be enough to maintain its efficiency. It formed the first business of the new leaders to address themselves to the question of patronage, and to frame some measure for making the "call" really effectual. That measure became the "Veto" Act, which did

not provide for the assent of any particular number of signatories to the call, but declared that the solemn dissent of a majority of heads of families, being communicants, should be deemed sufficient ground for the rejection of the presentee. The civil courts having pronounced against the legality of this ecclesiastical law, there then commenced that famous conflict of authorities, each producing terrible fulminations, which divided the church into "Intrusionists" and "Non-Intrusionists," and culminated in a spectacle unparalleled, nearly half its ministers and the greatest number of its ornaments withdrawing themselves from its communion. The national ferment which preceded and immediately succeeded this event, was intense, and had not been exceeded by the agitation of the most stirring previous political occurrences. Time has begun to soothe the acerbities of opposing factions, but festering wounds remain unhealed still. It is impossible for any one, no matter what his individual opinions, to withhold admiration from the proud resolution and lofty spirit of the men who guided this movement, and the rare courage and confiding trust of its adherents. The abandonment of home, the forfeiture of worldly possessions, the dissolution of ancient ties, the loss of friendships warmly cherished, were some of the sacrifices involved, and they were freely offered. It

is delightful to think that such courage and confidence have not been without their reward. We must all regret that some legislative efforts had not been earlier made to compose these differences. Parliament rejected the Church's "claim of right," and the Act of Lord Aberdeen, besides arriving too late, was totally inadequate to effect a reconciliation. The fact is, that comparatively few anticipated the possibility of a disruption, at least upon the scale afterwards exhibited, and an indifference prevailed in high quarters in regard to passing events, which others perceived were sure prognostications of the coming separation. But good has come out of great evil. The "Sustentation Fund," accumulated with surprising celerity, and already representing a magnificent amount, has secured comfortable provision for every minister of the Free Church, and each parish is promised a new place of worship. The clergy who remained behind have become more zealous in the discharge of their professional duties, and all contribute to the influence of good example. In our manse the consumption of whisky punch has marvellously declined, and for the first time for generations, we miss the presence of black coats at our country fairs. The disruption was a godsend to numbers of our parish schoolmasters, who, having long hoped against hope, were at length to abandon

the ferula and become expounders of the gospel. Others of the class who sympathized with the new order of things were less fortunate, for they were ejected from their office, and had to trust to the chances of future events.

Our national kirk has had her ranks often thinned. Dissenters, under the general denomination, have long been numerically powerful. The term seems first to have been applied with us in the eighteenth century, when the Secession Church was founded, and it includes by common use all who belong to the Baptist, Independent, and Methodist bodies. The Church of Rome does not accept the appellation, as it asserts a claim to be the Catholic Church. The Free Church is not unwilling to maintain a right of exclusion on similar grounds. Our Episcopalians are of course "dissenters," although, for the name, in its ordinary acceptation, none entertain a more fervid horror than they. Latterly, Scotch Episcopalians have been putting forward considerable pretensions. They possess a hierarchy, which consists of six bishops, each having a territorial diocese, and all as matter of course exercising diocesan rights. The chief is distinguished as "primus," and owes his elevation to his brethren on the bench. Were their social rank and importance to be measured by the vulgar rule of pounds, shillings,

and pence, it would not be great, for the income of our "primus" is considerably less than the Archbishop of Canterbury's, and, unlike the Bishops of London and Durham, those of Edinburgh and Glasgow do not receive 10,000*l.* a year! Indeed the scale of remuneration according to which the clergy of this communion are paid is disgracefully low; and although its members occupy the high places of the land, the average incomes of its priests are below what are enjoyed by ministers belonging to any of the bodies of presbyterian dissenters. There are few of those dignitaries and clergy, living or dead, who, since presbytery was re-established, have made great names for themselves in respect of theological or literary excellence. One of the latter was the father of a bishop, and the grandfather of another. His "memory is embalmed in immortal verse." So long as Scottish music shall be played, and Scottish reels be danced, the Reverend William Skinner, as the author of "*Tullochgorum*," will be heartily remembered.

Let Whig and Tory a' agree,
Whig and Tory, Whig and Tory;
Whig and Tory a' agree
To drap their Whig-mig-morum.

Let Whig and Tory a' agree
To spend the night wi' mirth and glee;
And cheerful sing alang wi' me,
The reel o' *Tullochgorum*!

A member of this self-constituted hierarchy whom I used occasionally to meet was the worthiest and most primitive of mankind. Dr. Jollie was the Bishop of Moray, and had long resided in the seaport town of Fraserburgh. He occupied "chambers" there, little more commodious than, and in their appointments not much superior to, an ordinary "but and ben." He was attended by a faithful duenna, who, in personal appearance, might have easily passed for one of the witches of Macbeth. The bishop wore the shovel hat, and a suit whose colour might originally have been orthodox, though age had made its ravages painfully apparent. There was no episcopal grandeur in his gait. The meanness of his person and the humility of his bearing disconnected him in one's mind from all fellowship with those men with whom we associate the presence of a mitre. According to his light he was truly pious and sincere, and according to his means generous and sympathizing. His mite was offered in the same spirit as the widow's. The calls of the sick were not neglected. "He dreaded the Pope, and hated the Presbyterians."

Another professional member of the Scotch Episcopacy has a position in the society of Edinburgh not unlike that which Mr. Alison occupied fifty years ago. There is neither bigotry nor narrow-minded-

ness about Dean Ramsay. His is that true Catholic faith which many profess and so few practise. Firmly attached to the principles of his own Church, he is tolerant of the religious convictions of others, and does not assert that within one communion only is our eternal welfare to be secured. The social place which his birth has given him, and especially his high standing as a clergyman, and many personal gifts, have long made him the cherished friend and adviser of some of the best of our aristocracy. But in the possession of their confidence and regard the interests of his large congregation have never been neglected; and now he seeks to enlarge the circle of his acquaintance, and has been soliciting introductions to a class whose members are beyond all doubt the best abused of any in the community, for to whom else are so persistently applied, in every hour of every day, such degrading epithets and such brutal expressions as to our unhappy cab-drivers? Dean Ramsay has chivalrously taken their case in hand, and does not tell them, after the fashion of other men, that they shall assuredly be damned; but in kind and friendly intercourse seeks to improve their social habits, and points out that no sphere, however humble, and no occupation, however mean, is without its influence for good. Efforts such as these to reform a class,

ordinarily so neglected and insulted, constitutes philanthropy in its best sense, and he is reaping pleasing fruits from his labour. Under rugged and sour exteriors he has found warm and susceptible, hearts, eager for regeneration, did they but know how to obtain it. In his intercourse with these people he has discovered the truth of the Ettrick Shepherd's words, in one of those touching songs of his on the affections, that it is not in the halls of the rich and powerful alone where love and tenderness reside.

'Tis not beneath the burgonet,
Nor yet beneath the crown ;
'Tis not on couch of velvet,
Nor yet on bed of down !

The Dean has been offered so often the grandeur of the "bench," that it seems as if he sympathised with the old adage, "*Nolo episcopari*." However that may be, of this he may be sure, that no official elevation could give him a higher place in the affections of his people or in the respect of his countrymen.

Our universities have been special blessings, and the curriculum selected was probably the best fitted for the circumstances of the country at the time ; although, now-a-days, when the nations of Europe are brought so near to each other, it is to be regretted

that our young men are not familiarized with the spoken languages of France and Germany. It was Sir Robert Peel who facetiously observed that "England, like Aberdeen, had two universities," and to those the men of the north have been under many obligations. The facilities for learning which they have afforded have been within the easy reach of the middle classes, and they have promoted general intelligence, and given us the influence attendant upon it. They can reckon numbers who, educated there, have left great names behind them, such as Sir James Mackintosh and Robert Hall, the celebrated English dissenting minister—fast friends and fellow students at King's College—and their reputation has been increased in this wise rather than by the fame of their professors. It has been rare, in my time, that chairs have been filled by incapable teachers, and nearly as rare that the repute of others has been more than local. Happily some notable exceptions do exist. I have already referred to Campbell and Beattie; and the Gerards and the Gregorys have a permanent place in the records of science and letters. Dr. Duncan Mearns is the chief ornament of our elder university now. We have few riper scholars. In the field of biblical criticism he is without a rival, and for acuteness of understanding, deep and close reasoning, terseness of style and lucidity of exposition,

no divine in the north approaches him. In the General Assembly he is the only real leader we supply it with. Feeble health, and a constitutional aversion to display, have kept him aloof on minor occasions; but on great questions he has come to the front, and since the days of Inglis, the "moderates" have not possessed a more accomplished and stragetic leader. He has never been a popular preacher. He neither "dusts the pulpit," nor indulges in other wild gesticulations which our people often mistake for eloquence, and so it happens that bare walls hear sermons from him infinitely superior to many which attract crowded congregations. From powerful conviction he is a keen partizan, and those who sympathize with his views on public policy form only a minority; but as a Presbyterian divine of great learning and intellectual vigour, candour must force the confession, that north of the Dee, whether among "the bond" or "free"—"the old lights" or "the new lights," none of his professional brethren are to be placed in comparison with him.

John Stuart Blackie is the best known of our younger professors. If his translation of Goethe's great dramatic poem of 'Faust' has encountered the severe handling of critics, it has at least established for him the reputation of an accomplished German scholar. In the chair of humanity in Marischal College, of

which he is a graduate, he exhibits a knowledge of the classics of ancient Rome as intimate as if they belonged to the literature of England; and if the Latin tongue is thus familiar to him, those admirable translations from Æschylus are evidence that in the language of Greece he is not less a proficient. In the class-room there exists between the professor and his pupils that sort of cordial and deferential intercourse which marks the intimacy of older and younger comrades. His effort is to destroy formality, and if possible to make everything, even prosody itself, look light and airy. Perhaps some of his colleagues, wise-looking, if not very wise philosophers, think there is too little reticence about him, and that it would be prudent if he tried to repress that *cacoethes* for speaking and writing with which nature has invested him, but I am of a different opinion. Such effervescence as his requires a way of escape, and what he does say and write is never dull—often wise and always amusing. There is nothing jesuitical about him. He has no mental reservations, but unfolds with a delightful candour, whatever the subject, the whole contents of his mind. The occasions of our meeting have been various. I have heard him in his earlier career confessing to a political creed which shocked and scared Whigs as well as Tories; but those opinions have since become

highly respectable, and one day may be adopted without danger. We have drank tea together at the houses of maiden ladies, whose primness vanished before those bursts of joyous nonsense and ridiculous assertions which they found it impossible to resist. I have been present when he put to silence presumptuous pedantry and unveiled the superficial pretensions of would-be savans; and I have seen him, on a summer's day, luxuriating in the total abandonment of professorial dignity, playing at snow-balling with my grandchildren on the top of Lochnagar. High attainments have not made him supercilious, or changed the simplicity of his nature, nor has scholastic success led him to turn a deaf ear to the calls of patriotism and philanthropy.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LANDED GENTRY OF THE TIME.

It is no exaggeration to say that sixty years ago we were a half-feudalized aristocracy. We prided ourselves on our "exclusiveness"—as the word is applied in modern society—and avoided all contact with those vulgar men whose incomes were derived from trade. Holding such views, the only openings considered good enough for our sons were the army and navy, the bar, the church—if that was not the kirk—and the Civil Service of the East India Company. Commerce was an occupation suited only for plebeians, although a few parents, not so scrupulous, and wiser in their generation, availed themselves of those openings which Holland, the ports of Russia, and our West India islands supplied. Emigration to the States of America, and to Canada, was confined almost exclusively to the poorer classes. Ceylon had not become a dependency of the crown, and our acquaint-

ance with China and its curious people was comparatively of the slightest kind. The price of land had not then begun to rise in the north, and no man thought of investing in it who was not assured of a return of at least five per cent. We had no such good things as "sporting rents," which have so providentially exalted those who are fortunate enough to possess great tracts of barren moors and lots of grouse; but while the war lasted produce of every description increased in value, and half in earnest, half in joke, Napoleon was called the "farmers' friend." We have dropped most of our narrow-minded prejudices, and have come to regard trading employment with kindlier feelings. We know now that the growth of our wealth stimulates commerce and manufactures, and that as their prosperity advances, agricultural products fetch enhanced prices. Many of the men that during the last five and twenty years have shown the best example, and been forward in promoting improvements, are those who, realizing large fortunes abroad and in our great towns, have sought landed investments, and are exhibiting in increasing numbers the same enlightened management in all parts of the country—from our own Highlands to the coast of Cornwall. To the advantage of the nation, and to the special benefit of individual families, the success of commerce

has wonderfully recruited the landed interest—our sons freely enlist in its ranks, and help to the continued spread of it. Its white flag has reached every corner of the world, fresh opportunities of gaining wealth present themselves, and if we must still look for the decline and fall of some ancient houses, and witness their fair acres pass into the hands of the stranger, we have seen others resuscitated, and established more firmly than ever, by the fortunate exertions of their sons. Our wide-spread colonial possessions afford ample scope for the contemplation of every species of climate and every variety of prosperity. The immense pastoral districts of our Australian empire, in which, according to Sir Roderick Murchison, gold is one day to be found, are annually attracting to them in vast numbers young men of all classes; while in the South Pacific Ocean, not far from the eastern shores of Australia, the two islands of New Zealand—more than twice the size of England—have begun to claim similar attention. If it be true that their climate is both delightful and salubrious, having a fertile soil adapted to many varieties of industry, we shall see there also the sons of Caledonia, escaping from their “gloomy hills and winter fastnesses,” become the pioneers of civilization and the founders of a new race of people. It has been finely said of Great Britain by an American

statesman, that "there is no hour of the twenty-four, which in one or other of the two hemispheres, does not see her ancient banner flung to the morning breeze, or hear the drum beat, or the bugle call of her soldiers sounding the *réveille*!"

The astonishing increase in rent-rolls, the great rise in the capitalized value of landed property, and the infusion of new blood, within the past twenty or thirty years, have all assisted in restoring our landowners to their ancient importance, attended as this has been by an intelligence of action and liberality of sentiment nearly unknown in my earlier days. County meetings, it is true, at least in some parts of the country, have not entirely abandoned the garb of ancient Toryism, and occasionally exhibit the rags of intolerance and prejudice; but even they have been forced to modify their views, and to follow—although at a very respectful distance—in the wake of public opinion. It makes me smile as I recall to mind my former acquaintance with these curious gatherings. For years "Harry" Dundas was their inspiring genius. His will, it was their pleasure to obey, and when he fell from the pinnacle of power, other political magnates of the same school received an allegiance not less unswerving. No under-secretaries ever served their chiefs with more devotion. The leader in our

county, so far as talk was concerned, was a vapoury laird, a member of the bar, who, not being appreciated there, returned to country quarters, and became an orator. If his eloquence consisted of abuse and not sarcasm, of declamation and not logic, that was of no consequence, for his *confrères* were always enthusiastic in their applause, and anything better might have been out of place. The theme presented few varieties. The infallibility of Pitt, the worth of Perceval, the piety of Eldon, and the wise diplomacy of Castlereagh, were alternately discoursed upon. All proposed changes in the Church raised the cry that it was to be destroyed. Any alteration in the franchise, and the constitution would be broken down. Addresses to the crown, expressive of undiminished confidence in his majesty's ministers, were constantly being voted; and they firmly believed that, thanks to their approving testimony, the reign of the Tories would be perpetuated. In withholding from such towns as Manchester, Glasgow, and Birmingham, a voice in the parliament, they could see no impropriety, any more than in continuing it to Gatton and Old Sarum with their handful of inhabitants. Adopting the wild speech of such men as Sir Charles Wetherall, our constitution was pronounced to be incapable of any amendment; and the rapid establishment of a "pure democracy" was

prognosticated as the fruit of reform. Very different was the prophecy of Mr. Macaulay, who observed in the House of Commons, "I cannot but anticipate for this reform bill a long series of happy years; of years during which a parental government will be firmly supported by a grateful nation; of years during which war, if it come, will find us an united people; of years pre-eminently distinguished by the progress of arts, by the improvement of laws, by the augmentation of the public resources, by the diminution of the public burdens, by all those victories of peace, of which, far more than in military success, consist the true felicity of states and the true glory of statesmen." Liberal opinions had as yet found the smallest sympathy among my neighbours; those who had the courage to avow them being denounced in the choicest language of stereotyped invective, and asked if they desired revolution and plunder. County meetings would have fulfilled only half their mission if a dinner had not wound up the business, and so in the evening we met convivially, and magnanimously tried to drown the acerbities of the morning. Toasts and eloquence on endless subjects were in profusion. If the orators were to be trusted, never before had so many men assembled in the same room remarkable for such versatility of talent and the charms of social worth. Once I remember a

very guileless gentleman to have proposed success to the "butter trade;" a most happy satire had he intended it! At another of these—not always very well assorted — reunions, shortly after the passing of the "hateful Reform Bill," my friend the first parliamentary representative of our county town was present. The chairman had many estimable qualities, but in society they were obscured by his terrific pomposity, which was conspicuous even in the old school of pomposity. A peer received all his homage, and he shrank with ill-concealed discomfort from contact with a newly-enriched plebeian, and with all who were affected by the leprosy of trade. Our new senator was so tainted, and his official dignity gave him a place next to the chair. I am afraid that the head of the feast was not very gracious in his deportment, but he was mistaken if he thought to appal the M.P. He complained of the infliction to his friends. Said he, "That Radical fellow sat beside me the other day, and immediately the cloth was removed, proposed that we should divide our wine bill. He conversed on all topics in the most pronounced and familiar manner. I gave him no encouragement, and had difficulty in withholding the expression of my surprise and indignant displeasure. For a time I got rid of his lively talk, when, judge of my astonishment, just as I was

sipping my second glass, he had the assurance to ask if I would join him in another bottle." "Trade" was too quick for "agriculture" on that occasion!

Our habits in domestic life have undergone a great change, which extended intercourse with our English neighbours has partly brought about. On the termination of the war, numbers who could afford the time and money—their thoughts now diverted from the one great topic of absorbing interest—desired to move about, and Scotland became crowded with travellers. The works of Sir Walter Scott had made an universal impression, and Englishmen in the first instance, and foreigners afterwards, flocked to visit those scenes, the description of which, as has been well observed, had produced on all "an electric shock of delight." The means of general communication were still very imperfect, but it made all things possible; and minor difficulties and discomforts abetted rather than discouraged the prevailing desire to explore our northern shores. Till then, speaking collectively, we had no social intercourse with the "glaiket Englishers." Thus commenced, it has since so rapidly increased that we are, emphatically, one people. The descendants of the M'Ivors have often shared an English coronet, and many a southern maiden has lent fresh attractions to the beauty of a Highland home. The early dinner

and lengthened sederunts over deep potations of "Scotch claret" and uncountable tumblers of whisky-punch—both wine and spirits disowning all allegiance to the exciseman—hot suppers, and again yet deeper potations, obscene anecdotes, and the coarsest swearing, have alike disappeared; so that, had Lord Hermand lived, he would have found that that day had partially arrived, predicted by him forty years before, when mourning over the signs of approaching degeneracy. "What shall we come to at last? I believe I shall be left alone on the face of the earth—drinking claret!" The "haggis" which we used to love so well has become too vulgar for our feast days, and but for Burns's lines we should scarcely remember its likeness:—


Fair fa' your honest sonsie face,
Great chieftain o' the puddin' race,
Aboon them a' ye tak your place,
Painch, tripe, and thairm;
Weel are ye worthy o' a grace
As lang's my arm!

Those who have fallen on these sober times must fail to realize what a bacchanalian party was fifty years ago. It was not always the love of drink which suggested the enormous consumption of it. Wine is not less agreeable to the palates of men of this than of the last generation, but they are satisfied

with a few glasses, and do not go on imbibing till they "swagger and screech." Drinking was then regarded as a sort of manly exercise. To be "well up" in the hunting field, to be a crack shot and an expert angler, were well enough, but unless one likewise exhibited a capacity for drinking, and a constant willingness to prove it, those other accomplishments made him little considered at a post-prandial sporting meeting. He had utterly failed to earn the title of a "good fellow." There was one vessel which was sometimes in use on these occasions, whose presence foretold the certainty of a "wet night." This was a silver goblet, modelled after the shape of a fox's head, and capable of holding a third of a bottle. It was so fashioned that it might not stand upon the table, and custom decreed that its contents should be quaffed as soon as presented. He was a bold man who declined the offering, for his comrades branded him as an imbecile and a poltroon. Five-bottle men soon bowed before its power, since the rapidity of the operation, directed by the host, the *arbiter bibendi*, increased the potency of the draught, and a condition of physical incapacity and total unconsciousness crowned the pleasures of the evening. After one of these boozes a poor friend of mine fell asleep in this crapulent fashion, and so passed into "the slumber which knows no dreams."

The Swedish peg-tankard, famous in Scandinavian traditions, from which Gustavus Adolphus and his valiant soldiers are said to have suffered ignominious overthrows, had not a more dangerous influence than the "fox's head."

We continue to consume a deal of tobacco, and the quantity increases. In 1800 it was ten million pounds; in 1830, more than fifteen million; and in 1840, forty million. It and snuff contribute to the revenue 5,000,000*l*. When I was young all classes in the country smoked pipes, and none of us knew what the grandeur of cigars meant. "Snuff-taking," which was then also general, has become exceptional. Half a century ago women as well as men had their "boxes." A snuff-horn, usually handsomely mounted, was seen in most families of high and low degree, and treasured with the respect due to a valuable heirloom. After dinner it frequently accompanied the passage of the bottles, and was supposed to contribute to sociality. George IV. kept up the fashion. He did not possess, or choose to copy, many of his mother's virtues, although this one—and I hope it is a virtue—of "Old Snuffy," as her subjects used most irreverently to call her majesty, he did inherit. A few old dandies still carry their boxes, and affect to take snuff after the peculiar manner of the king. At the early period I speak of "chewing" was



likewise very common, and both peers and peasants practised it. We complain of the Yankees for the way in which they exercise their *spitting* powers, but in that respect our fathers were not outstripped by them. But the dirtiest of all the uses of tobacco has, to the honour of the nation, at last disappeared. This was "plugging." The preliminary process of chewing having been satisfactorily completed, the pulp was taken from the mouth and transferred to the nostril. Remaining there for a convenient season—an inconvenient one for neighbours—it was returned to the mouth, again submitted to the process of mastication, and at length thrown away. Will it be credited that this was a habit tolerated in "good society?" Whence it came I cannot tell, but the savages of modern days do not seem to resort to anything more disgusting. To me especially it is full of sickening memories. A very few years ago I sat, for twelve hours in the mail coach, *vis-a-vis* to the Laird of ———, the last of pluggers. He was a good judge of wine, and used to say of it, in his own rough way, that he had not much taste, but a "most damnable *smell*." The latter part of the assertion, as I can vouch, was strictly true, and it must have applied to all who "plugged."

Politics often severed the ties which had long united private friendship, and old allies became

uncompromising opponents. In my own case, the assertion of revolutionary principles (another and contemporary term for Whiggery) bringing me into disgrace, my society was placed under the ban of proscription by several neighbours, but others more tolerant still found a seat for me at their tables. Political references, however, were avoided with as much caution as family blots. We talked of fairs and prices, crops and stocking, the best points of our horses and dogs, and—Napoleon Buonaparte !

CHAPTER VII.

FRIENDS, NEIGHBOURS, AND CELEBRITIES.

GEORGE, Duke of Gordon, long known as the Marquis of Huntly, was by far the most popular man in the north, and his reputation did not diminish as years advanced, and his social rank was increased. Other men had survived such ephemeral distinctions, especially if, in politics, they were opposed to the progress of liberal opinions; but the Duke, though the most uncompromising of Tories, remained popular still. There was something about his noble presence which disarmed opposition. That winning smile and gracious manner—that frank and manly bearing carried everything before them. None knew so well how to preside at a convivial meeting and to make all things pleasant. He did not affect to be an orator, and asserted no claim to superior understanding. What he did and said displayed the happiest

tact. He had a rare instinct for remembering faces (and people are pleased to be recognized by a duke), and reading character with ease and correctness. Like an experienced "whip," he kept his team well in hand, and each had his own share of work. On these occasions we don't care for too much sense, or an exclusive devotion to mirth and vapidty. Even the House of Commons would grow wearied if only Lord John and Sir Robert addressed it. Lord Palmerston and Mr. Disraeli must be heard too. The brilliant oratory of Macaulay and Gladstone would pall by constant repetition, and it would long for the lively sallies of Colonel Sibthorpe and young Bernal Osborne; and so in the case of social gatherings, whether they are political or concern the affairs of farmers' clubs. The Duke's sound sense told him that the bill of fare both at, and after dinner, must present ample varieties. He desired the spread of valuable information, and the circulation of "gleesome" words. The men whose sagacity and practical experience had won success were invited to deliver their opinions. Wide scope was allowed for the ventilation of theories and the sports of eccentricity. He knew on whom to call for the best "sentiments" and the most amusing songs, and he poked fun round about him. No wonder we came to call him the "Cock of the North." The Duke

thoroughly enjoyed life, and delighted to see everybody cheerful and happy.

Well! be the graceless lineaments confest!
I do enjoy this beauteous, bounteous earth,
And dote upon a jest
Within the limits of becoming mirth!

As a territorial landowner the political influence of the Duke of Gordon was very great, and it was powerfully employed. Aided chiefly by his mother, the charming and witty Duchess Jane, he raised the Gordon Highlanders, the renowned 92nd. The Duke saw a good deal of active service, and held a subordinate command in that campaign which was said to have been the only achievement of the Portland ministry—the Walcheren disaster. When he eventually set up his rural household gods at Gordon Castle, nothing could exceed the geniality with which its hospitalities were dispensed. The princely domain afforded opportunities for most of the manly sports of the nation. The disciples of Isaac Walton had such salmon fishing in the Spey as their great master would have envied. Deer stalking and grouse shooting were supplied by forests only inferior to those of Mar and Atholl.

Though heathe, mosse, 'mong frogs, and bogs, and fogs,
'Mongst craggy cliffs and thunder-batter'd hills;
Hares, hinds, bucks, roes, are chased by men and dogs,
Where two hours' hunting four score fat deer kills.

And nowhere was the noble host more at home than when comparing at some coursing meeting the relative merits of his neighbour's greyhounds and his own. It was not the patrician alone who was made welcome at his table; and there one frequently met some of those tenant farmers on the Gordon estates who had been the earliest contributors to the improvement of agriculture, and whose enterprise never flagged from want of encouragement on the part of a family which had always been loyal to the principles of "live and let live." All alike were treated with polished courtesy—the stamp of true nobility—and the absence of which exposes what is counterfeit. Occasionally it was impossible to repress a smile at the homely expressions—never offensively employed—of some favourite tenant, as when the Duke having asked one of them what he would eat, was informed in reply, "I'll hae a bit o' that roasted stot, please your grace." The duke was the last male representative of his race. His great estates have gone to enrich the noble house of Lennox, and the second title has descended to the Gordons of Aboyne, who, thus becoming Marquises of Huntly, have gained a step in the peerage of Scotland.

We have other noblemen of high rank and princely fortune. The Duke of Sutherland is one of them. His grace is no orator, and longs not for opportunities of

delivering pretty after-dinner speeches, and announcing, what this sort of constant repetition has made a high-sounding aphorism, that "property has its duties as well as its rights." Yet in two divisions of the kingdom his tenants have practical experience of how fully he recognizes its obligations. The Duke is only half a Highlander. His father, Marquis of Stafford, was created Duke of Sutherland by William IV., his mother being Countess of Sutherland and head of the clan. Her life presented the brightest specimen of worldly prosperity, although its earliest years were crowded with sorrow and perplexity. Her parents died within a few days of each other when she was a twelvemonth old, and for years she was involved in a labyrinth of legal proceedings, while a kinsman contested with her the right to the peerage. The House of Lords established her claim, and this helpless infant lived to fill and adorn the highest social position. Sir Robert Gordon, with a pride of ancestry, endeavours to carry back her pedigree to the fabulous ages of antiquity, but it is clearly shown that she shared a common descent from the powerful race of "De Moravia," the ancient lords of Duffus, from whom spring the Dukes of Atholl and the other great branches of "Murray," and through the female line, the proud and popular family of "Douglas." So long ago as the time of David I., the

Sutherlands had extensive possessions; and now, with the exception of a narrow strip on the coast of Dornoch firth, own the whole county which bears their name. Among the fine estates which have been absorbed by them is the territory which once belonged to the "Mackays," who are represented by the Lords of Reay. In the north, Earl John was the chief pillar of the Whig and Hanoverian government, and in the beginning of last century held almost despotic sway over the whole country from the Dee to the Orkney islands.

The present Duchess—one of "the Howards"—is mistress of the robes at the court of Queen Victoria. Her noble presence and resplendent beauty revive recollections of her grandmother, the renowned Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire. The duke's brother, the Earl of Ellesmere, better known as Lord Francis Egerton, is distinguished in the world of letters, and has studied politics with success in the school of Sir Robert Peel. He inherits the great estates of his relative, the last of the Dukes of Bridgewater, the most far-seeing and public-spirited English landowner of the eighteenth century.

The Earl of Fife is another of our princes, although the present peer is not in possession of all the wealth of the family. His uncle, who made great havoc among "cock-lairds," left immense landed pro-

perty, and directed that during the lives of his brother and eldest nephew those acquisitions should remain for accumulation in the hands of trustees appointed to administer them. Lord Fife has always had a dash of eccentricity about him, but is a man of considerable attainments and much general information. His life has been passed in extremes. In his youth he attached himself to the army of Spain, rose high in its service, and gave evidence that he shared the courage of his race. There was no gayer cavalier in the time of the Regency, and it is said that his friend and future sovereign occasionally helped him to rather unprofitable investments. Later he held office in the king's household; and on his dismissal, a caricature which amused London, and found its way to the north, comically represented him as the "discharged fifer." He spends the evening of his days in a noble mansion on the banks of the Deveron, surrounded by scenery of which we have none finer; but his habits have become those of a recluse. The services of London footmen, Swiss valets, and French cooks have been dispensed with, and a curious and "rudely-shaped" little creature ministers to the wants of the "Thane of Fife." His conversation is a spoken treatise "*de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis.*" He carries you with him to ancient Greece and Rome, and discourses familiarly on the works of

their great dramatists and poets. Suddenly you are transported into the heart of the Peninsula, to hear of British pluck, Spanish duplicity, and "old masters." Again you find yourself in the most brilliant coterie—face to face with the Regent and Sheridan, the Duke of York and Beau Brummel. Then there are tender reminiscences of those graceful *danseuses* whose charms have fascinated more peers than one; and considering his apparent solitude and former life, you marvel to learn that he is deeply versed in the newest scandal which is exciting womankind in his neighbour town of Banff. Occasionally he quits his seclusion to pay a passing visit to one of his many country seats, and although he avoids the squirearchy, the levees he then holds are frequent and numerous attended. The "Court Circular" might not call the company select, but it is at least homogeneous. The old women of the district are forward in the offer of their greetings, for they have long experienced his benevolence; and as most of them claim the honour of having either wet, or dry-nursed his lordship, it is impossible that such near and intimate attentions should be meanly requited. One octogenarian of this class had her services recognized the other day in the most gallant fashion. "Eh man," said she, speaking of it to a neighbour afterwards, "I had sic a grand kiss frae the lord, I

wad na ha' ta'en a five pound note for't." This house is nearly the only one he enters. My eldest son and he met, and were intimate in the Peninsula, and fight their battles over again at fatiguing length. I am constrained to say that the truthful historian has failed to chronicle many of those wonderful marches and counter-marches, feats and passages of arms, to which I have been condemned to listen in their post-prandial recollections. The hope of the family is centered in Lord Fife's nephew and presumptive heir. His kind and genial nature, warm attachments and generous impulses, amply qualify him for the great post he is destined to fill; and those whose names are inscribed on that princely rent-roll will find him animated by a desire to see them prosperous and contented.

The north boasts of two more noble houses, which, if they do not now own broad acres, are prominently associated with its earlier history, and have survived many perils national and individual. They are the Hays, Earls of Erroll, and the St. Clairs, Earls of Caithness.

Since 1315 the Hays have been hereditary Great Constables, an office which, similar to those of Constable of France and Lord High Constable of England, gives its holder on state occasions rank in Scotland after the blood royal. Their ancestor, eight

hundred years ago (prior to the battle of "Loncarty"), was but a rustic ; as Sir Walter Scott makes Lord Morton say, "The bloody yoke actually dragged the plough ere it was blazoned on a crest by the herald." By an act of cool courage he checked the fury of Danish invaders, and contributing to a crowning victory, averted national disaster. Time has curtailed its territorial possessions, but the renown of the family has never been tarnished, nor has its personal influence diminished. It has given its sons freely to the service of the state, and its fair daughters have united themselves in marriage with the proudest members of the aristocracy. George, the seventeenth earl, has filled high offices in the royal household during the last and present reigns, and is an example that chivalry has not been consigned to the tomb, but lives among us still, in its best gracefulness. The old castle, enfeebled by age, has been replaced by a stately edifice, washed by the waves of the German Ocean. Let us hope that for centuries to come it may acknowledge no other master than such as belongs to the noble race which it now shelters. Samuel Johnson, who in his journey through the Hebrides was the guest of Lord Errol—almost the only peer whose house was opened to receive him—thus describes it. "It is built upon the margin of the sea, so that the walls of one of the towers seem only a continua-


tion of a perpendicular rock, the foot of which is beaten by the waves. To walk round the house seems impracticable. From the windows, the eye wanders over the sea which separates Scotland from Norway, and when the winds beat with violence, must enjoy all the terrific grandeur of a tempestuous storm. I would not for my amusement wish a storm, but as storms, whether wished or not, will sometimes happen, I may say, without violation of humanity, that I should willingly look out upon them from Slains Castle."

The St. Clairs, or Sinclairs, have long taken the lead in Caithness, and, as the chiefs of the name, have lived there, as earls and barons, for four hundred years and more. They were not instrumental in bygone days in promoting useful measures, and seem to have been constantly engaged in hostile conflicts with their powerful neighbours, the lords of Sutherland and the head of the Mackays; so much so, that the history of the county then principally supplies accounts of petty wars, rapine, and murder. Of any one of those chiefs it might be said—

Like a born fiend along the plain he thundered,
Prest to be carving throats, while others plundered.

The present family is not to be confounded with those other earls who, dating their rule from the

Norwegian invasion in 850, held it so firmly and exclusively, that the Gaelic language ceased to be spoken in its eastern division. Those northern usurpers had studded the whole coast with their castles and strongholds; and it was not until the beginning of the thirteenth century, the race then becoming extinct, that our kings were enabled to consolidate their authority, and choose commanders of their own. The primitive possessors of Caithness—and it is difficult to say who they were—must have been entirely isolated from the rest of the world, for they were hemmed in on three sides by the sea, and a range of lofty and almost impassable mountains on the other, and we do know that before the Christian era it was occupied by a Celtic and barbarous people. The ancient rivalries of the lords of Sutherland and Caithness have long ago passed away. The clash of arms and the sounds of boisterous revelry are no more heard; and the only contests in which they now engage are in well-directed efforts for the improvement of their estates, and the advancement of the social condition of those who dwell upon them. The young lord of Berriedale exhibits much mechanical and scientific ability; and while many scions of noble houses are enacting the part of amateur Jehus to our mail and stage coaches—to the imminent peril of the lives of the lieges—he is engaged



with the zeal and knowledge of a professional *employé* in testing the capabilities of some of those locomotives which have made the name of George Stephenson immortal. If the future chief of the St. Clairs ever indulges in day dreams, perhaps he contemplates the period when, standing on an engine, he shall be exhibiting its powers along the quays at Wick, to great crowds of his wonder-stricken fishermen.

So insignificant a position did Caithness occupy in the early part of last century, that it had no representative in parliament, except in conjunction with the distant county of Bute—a curious and most inconvenient combination. Now it practically returns two members, as the influence of the burghers of Wick is preponderant in the elections of our most northern group of towns.

Another noble house, for centuries distinguished in our national annals, although its old Scotch possessions have long been dissociated from its chief, has lately acquired by purchase a large estate in the north, and fixed its abode there. The Earl of Crawford and Balcarres and his family are showing us an excellent example—as their antecedents elsewhere assured us they would do—by the interest they take in the welfare of the poor, in the spread of education, and the liberal promotion of the best agricultural

improvements. The noble peer is the premier earl, and the premier marquis and premier baron of Scotland are his neighbours. Surrounded by families of such ancient descent, it is no wonder that "Spalding Clubs" flourish among us, and that increased desire is felt to explore the depths of genealogical mysteries. To the Lord Lindsay, the heir to the titles and ample fortune of the family, we are proud to point as another member of the aristocracy who has devoted himself with marked success to the pursuits of literature, and earned a reputation more enduring than if he had taken a distinguished part in the exciting warfare of political life. Science, as well as the current literature of the day, is under great obligations to our "old nobility." The Earl of Rosse has been familiarizing our acquaintance with the heavenly bodies. His great telescope—erected at a cost of thirty thousand pounds—is one of the many modern wonders of the world. Besides being of the utmost value in confirming knowledge previously acquired, it has given us a most interesting description of the surface of the moon, and discovered numerous binary and trinary stars. Lord Mahon has written a history of England, from the Peace of Utrecht to the peace of Versailles, already an acknowledged standard work. To the Earl of Ellesmere we are indebted for some able translations from German literature; and

"Young England," represented by Lord John Manners and the Honourable George Smythe, have supplied us with specimens of poetic genius, which if not high enough to afford to their authors reasonable expectation of becoming our laureates, are at least pleasing contributions.

Among my earlier friends and neighbours were three brothers, all disdaining the chains of matrimony, for which they expressed an aversion partly affected, but chiefly real. I have never known in one family such tall and stalwart members. They must have counted descent from those early giants we read of, for the shortest was six feet three in his "stocking soles." In the country-side they were familiarly distinguished as "Nimrod," "Ramrod," and "Fishing-rod," sporting names all, and intended to represent that their several favourite pursuits were hunting, shooting, and fishing. The evening attire of each presented a droll resemblance, the chief distinction being that, whereas two of them wore powder, the *cerebellum* of the third was crowned with that species of wig—all but extinct—which during the latter part of the last century was known by the name of a "brown George." The old castle which sheltered these kind-hearted men was ornamented with quantities of small towers and pepper-boxes, for which our architects, for generations, retained the

steadiest regard. The garden, more famed for vegetables than flowers—like most gardens of that day—lay immediately under the windows, and all tasteful arrangements were conspicuous by their absence. It was the dining-room to whose comfort the greatest attention was devoted. In summer it was always cool, in winter never cold. No works of art adorned it, and in place of them skulls of red and fallow deer, with branching horns—monuments to the prowess of “Ramrod”—covered the walls. The bell-ropes from head to foot were concealed by “brushes,” which proved that “Tallyho the fox” had not been sounded in vain. The table groaned under great sirloins and gigots—home-fed; and in a house where all were sportsmen, one found, as was to be expected, in pleasing variety, a profusion of game. Sherry and port—of body to have pleased Lord Eldon—were the favourite wines; and ale, in silver tankard, “strong enough to blow a man’s beaver off,” smiled in treacherous amenity. “Nimrod” and “Ramrod” had seen even less of the world than I had. Their circle of friends comprised their nearest neighbours, and their longest journeys were to the county fairs. The youngest, “Fishing-rod,” had more ambitious views. Some years prior to the time I speak of he had resolved to improve himself by travel. I know not if the words in which Cowper describes the

stupid youth making the tour of the Continent would have applied to his case—

How much a dunce that has been sent to Rome
Excels a dunce that has been kept at home—

but “Archie” had no intention of visiting the polished capitals of other nations, and only desired to see that country which is said to have been the seat of many kings, and was still famous for its cordial and profuse hospitality. There too he would have opportunities more varied, and as abundant as he had left behind, of improving his piscatorial proclivities. To Ireland he directed his steps, and in Ireland remained for six months. Constant as was his reference to the “Green Isle” in after life, I cannot say that I was edified by the narrative, nor were others differently impressed. He took with him excellent introductions to the capital, and Dublin society in those days was worth knowing. He might have heard repeated the best things of George Selwyn and Jekyll, and listened to the sprightly witticisms of Norbury and Curran ; but if he did, poor Archie’s intellect was much too dull to appropriate them. He had not even carried back with him a sentence of its inimitable blarney ; and except the heaviest stock of the stalest common-places, he could merely recount with a ponderous

exactness, which perennial repetition did not diminish, the numbers and weight of the fish he had landed on the banks of Killarney, and a few touching reminiscences concerning certain broken noses and cracked heads he had been fortunate enough to see yield to the fascinations of the well-beloved "shillelagh." His good-natured brothers regarded him with uneasiness as he approached Irish affairs; and as Sir Robert Peel once observed that Ireland was his chief difficulty, so it proved to them in their management of Archie. Said "Nimrod" to him one evening, as we were comfortably seated round the horse-shoe table, and he was assiduously interrupting conversation by an affectation of superior knowledge, founded upon his Irish experience, just as if he had been some enterprising traveller, or a companion of Captain Cook in his voyage round the world—"Weel, man, I'se tell ye fat it is. I wish ye war in Ireland noo, and Ireland i' the boddom o' the sea." Archie had acquired the habit of drawing a long bow, which gained upon him as years stole on. Frequent attempts by the laird to check him made only a fleeting impression. There was a Christmas party at which I was present, and Archie was in his best form. He had found an excellent listener, and thus encouraged, his chronicles became more apocryphal than ever. The head of the feast had

long felt anxious, and at length vouchsafed a warning. "Archie, stick to facts!" Had Archie been wise he would have profited by words comparatively mild. But he was foolish, and not wise; and ere many minutes had elapsed we were startled by another address from "Nimrod," who could "stand it" no longer. "Archie, that's a daammed lee!" For the rest of that evening "Fishing-rod" devoted himself more to the bottle than to talk. My friends, possessing the frames, would not have been unfit to share the orgies of Scandinavian heroes. All their lives, without any bad effects, they had been devoted to Bacchus, and with the meaning of that modern word "seedy" were wholly unacquainted. It was whisky-punch in which they most delighted, and other beverages were worthless in comparison. They were almost of opinion that it was wrong for Scotchmen

Wi' bitter dearth for wines to mell or foreign gill,
 May gravels round his blather wranch,
 And gout torment him inch by inch,
 W'ha twists his gruntle, wi' a glunch
 O' sour disdain,
 Out oure a glass o' whisky-punch
 Wi' honest men.

My wife and I used to spend a week every year at the most social of country houses. The laird was one of the many cadets of the noble houses of

"Gordon" which have taken root on Spey, Don, Dee, and Ythan sides. Two maiden sisters, who at sixty, unlike Ninon, had failed to retain the comeliness of youth, but were remarkable for many estimable qualities of head and heart, had long directed his domestic affairs. In their eyes no other man was to be compared with their brother, and none shared with them the first place in his affections. Never was there residence with fewer exterior attractions. The architect could not have been a favourite pupil of Sir Christopher Wren; and Nature had been so niggard of her attentions, that the united genius of landscape-gardeners—had we then obtained introductions to them—must have been utterly powerless to extract beauty from the situation. Great peat-mosses don't produce lively impressions, and many miles of our journey supplied scenery of this description. Till the lodge was reached all was very dreary. We used to think that those greyhounds rampant which crowned the iron gate looked as if they bade us welcome, and the cordial greetings which followed gave us our good spirits back again. Everything within doors proclaimed the reign of plenty. The furniture certainly was old and heavy to a fault, and the chairs were so large as to support the belief that, generations ago, the proportions of the human body ex-

ceeded those which belong to it now; but each apartment felt as if provision had been made for the special comfort of its inmates, and the pleasant presence of the owner threw a genial influence over all. We had not reached the era of that later fashion, when numerous small tables of marqueterie and mosaic, covered with curious and precious nick-nacks, take up prominent positions in the drawing-room, and were content with plainer and larger articles of household use, whose most conspicuous ornaments were often the best editions of the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' 'Blair's Sermons,' and the 'Commentaries of Matthew Henry.' There was no pomp of plate, but all one saw was genuine—real, not shadowy. The laird would have called it an imposture had he set before his friends that spurious metallic composition with which modern hosts delight to irradiate their parties. Besides the spacious punch-bowls, the family were said to own large quantities of rare old china; but these objects of ceramic art—too precious for display—had long found a convenient resting-place in some safe retirement, where the vulgar eye could not hope to penetrate. An ancestor, more than sixty years before, had visited Southern Europe, and through him he had become the possessor of a few of those choice specimens which record the genius of

Velasquez and Murillo, Raphael and Guido. Some portraits by the great painters in the reign of our Second Charles—Sir Peter Lely and Sir Godfrey Kneller—realizing the description of Dryden, were likewise conspicuous on the walls.

Such are thy pictures, Kneller, such thy skill,
That nature seems obedient to thy will :
Comes out and meets thy pencil in the draught,
Lives there, and wants but words to speak thy thought !

And more than one likeness of his progenitors proclaimed the artistic skill of Jameson, our Scottish Vandyke. But the work of art which the Gordons prized the most had been painted by a great-uncle of their own, and represented in gigantic proportions the persistent enemy of mankind as he has been portrayed in the glowing language of Milton.

Meanwhile the adversary of God and man,
Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest degree,
Puts on swift wings, and towards the gates of hell
Explores his solitary flight.

It was not without merit, and had long been regarded in the parish with a sort of superstitious deference. The laird never wearied in the recital of anecdotes concerning it. He used to say that one Sunday morning, while strolling on the lawn, a couple of bumpkins accosted him, who, failing to recognize its lord and master, desired he would

introduce them to what was worth beholding in the house. The picture of Satan stood over the mantel-piece in the library, and seemed to invest his visitors with profound interest. Their examination of it was earnest and prolonged, till at length one of them relieved his thoughts by the exclamation—suggestive and yet conclusive—“That’s the laird himsel’, nae doot !” When the first Exhibition of the Fine Arts took place in Edinburgh, this family *chef-d’œuvre* was removed from the elevation it had so long occupied, and despatched for shipment to the nearest seaport. On its way there the unusual appearance of the load excited the curiosity of some acquaintances of the man in charge, who, in answer to their inquiry, “What’s that you’ve got, Jock?” were informed by Jock, “It’s oor deevil awa’ on an expedition!”

Our host was in every respect fitted to make his guests feel at ease and happy. No injunction such as Theseus gave to Philostratus, to stir up the party to “merriment,” was necessary.

Awake the pert and nimble spirit of youth,
Turn melancholy into funerals,
The pale companion is not for our pomp.

He was his own master of the revels, and radiated conviviality. We had small variety of visitors, and they chiefly belonged to neighbouring families; but

there were a few others who lived farther off. Among the latter were two dear old ladies—the Miss Duffs, of Corsindae; Mr. Rutherford, an Edinburgh accountant, the Gordons' attached friend and trusted counsellor; and less frequently a town-clerk of some local repute, connected by matrimony with the family, who owned the vulgar patronymic of Macguffie.

The Miss Duffs, although well stricken in years, were still vigorous and vivacious. They claimed kindred with the noble chief of the clan, and were grateful to Shakespeare for the immortality which he had conferred on the "good Macduff." More staunch Jacobites were not to be found; and their recollections of the Young Chevalier were to them priceless treasures. They hated, with a perfect hatred, the memory of the "butcher of Culloden." Queen Charlotte's devotion to her snuff could not have exceeded theirs. They had long led a town life; and from occupying the highest flat of a lofty house, and their loving bearing to each other, had become popularly known as the "cushie doos." Their evening symposiums at home had obtained for them much favour and distinction; and civic magnates still remember with affection those portly turkeys and capons which make us feel that the present races are mean in comparison. The middle



classes had not begun to affect French cookery, and we had not then been introduced to fricandeaux and salmis, and were ignorant of the attractions of côtelettes and filets; and so in place of them your attention was commended to copious supplies of tripe, odoriferous of onions, and mince collops after the most orthodox of national receipts. Those gentle wood-pigeons have soared into higher regions, and their nest has passed into the possession of a degenerate brood; but in the quaint old manor-house of the family, their brother's widow, under the weight of more than fourscore years, continues to discharge, with charming cordiality, all the duties of a popular châtelaine of the olden time.

It was impossible not to like the accountant. There was a manly gentleness about him, which disarmed all opposition and commanded all our respect.

Both sexes' virtues were in him combined;
 He had the fierceness of the manliest mind,
 And yet the meekness, too, of womankind.
 His soul was filled with truth and honesty,
 And with another thing quite out of date,
 Called modesty.

He had long been at the head of his profession, and was indeed one of the chief-corner stones of Dunedin. No man could unravel with more success confused and intricate masses of figures, and extract from them such lucid and reliable statements; and

his perfect uprightness made one sure that everything had been disclosed to view. But although attached to his vocation, to which he had given years of laborious application, he could abandon, with an enviable freedom, all its cares. He had no restraint of manner about him in society—none of that professional pedantry and talk which are offensive—and he stood before you a pleasant, well-informed, and unaffected gentleman. He used no effort to conceal by his speech the country which gave him birth, and utterly repudiated that curious *patois* cultivated by some younger men, which has been profanely called “Princes Street English.” Perhaps we took to him all the more kindly that the bucolic nostalgia had possessed him; for he practised as an amateur, with more zeal than profit I fear, on a small estate in one of the prettiest corners of Perthshire. At all events he was universally popular, and infinitely preferred discussions which concerned cattle rather than figures, and the decisions of agricultural meetings to those of the Court of Session. I should be both unjust and ungrateful if I failed to chronicle that the bins of Bell and Rainnie contain no better vintages than those exhibited on the table of Mr. Rutherford.

There were many good points about the town-clerk, though he was hardly adapted to amuse country

gentlemen, or to make a country house lively. His talk was not bucolic, but municipal, and that was feeble rather than expressive. It was replete with sesquipedalian, or as a neighbour of mine quite as expressively calls them, "long-nebbed" words; and the even flow of it was interrupted by certain hesitations of utterance; but twenty years previously some civic business had carried him to London, and he had been heard to say that all great men there spoke in that fashion. The clothes which enveloped his person were always of the best, and his linen was irreproachable. So attired, who could help being respectable? His burgh had conferred its freedom on Sir Robert Peel, and he overflowed with gratitude as he remembered how warmly the illustrious statesman had shaken him by the hand. Macguffie in his youth had earned a provincial renown by his clever delivery of what, in some convivial reunions, were known as "nonsense speeches;" and now, when middle age had been passed, his wisest saws proclaimed that the talent lingered with him still.

These visits entailed on us a deal of hard work. Our host fretted if we partook not of every dish presented to our notice, and declinature was regarded in the light of a personal indignity. I was reminded of the description Dean Swift gives of "country hospitality." "Indeed, Mr. Bickerstaff," said the lady,

“you must eat a wing to oblige me, and so put a couple upon my plate. I was persecuted at this rate during the whole meal. As often as I called for small beer, the master tipped the wink, and the servant brought me a brimmer of October.” Hot suppers—the “cœna” of the ancients, which they loved so well—flourished in these days. In this respect the taste of the minister of the parish was eminently classical. We lingered after our evening repast to discuss the contents of the capacious punch-bowl, which never were so good as when intrusted to the artistic preparation of the divine. On one occasion a further supply had been voted by acclamation, but the servants having gone to bed, the difficulty of procuring hot water presented itself. An officious and thirsty guest, who resolved that no obstacle should be insuperable, set out on a cruise of discovery, and stumbling into an adjoining room, laid violent hands on a jug of butter-milk. For the moment there was but one idea in his head. That jug of course contained it. The trophy was seized, and exultingly produced. No one questioned the nature of its contents. The whisky and sugar had already found their natural resting-place, and the remaining ingredient was now supplied. The minister pronounced the mixture to be excellent, and whereas the first bowl was only fit to be imbibed by *boys*, this

one, said his reverence, was drink for *men*. Our parson would have been miserable in this temperance age. He honoured the opinions of Horace, and would have despised the addresses of Father Mathew.

Nec durare diis, nec vivere carmina possunt,
Quæ saibuntur aquæ potoribus !

The arrangement of my friend's *toilette* was so curiously distinguished in one particular, that I must notice it. He never shaved. His whiskers, if entrusted to the care of an artistic *coiffeur*, might have become worthy of a Mantalini, but he wore neither beard nor moustache. A careful observer would have imagined that his razors were first-rate and in daily requisition. Nothing of the kind. A magnifying glass made him minutely acquainted with the condition of his face, and all hairy excrescences thus exposed to view were promptly removed by the aid of a well-appointed pincers. He told me that when he commenced this habit he used to bleed like a pig; that after a time the bleeding stopped, though the pain did not; but that those temporary inconveniences having long ago passed away, his morning investigation was pursued, not only with interest, but with results which, in their accomplishment, afforded him positive enjoyment !

George Skene of Skene was another of the men I used occasionally to meet. He inherited a fine

estate, and was the last representative of a race which, through good and evil report, during six hundred years, had resided upon it, and managed to hand it down in its integrity, without the aid of any settlements of entail. The first of the name had saved the life of his sovereign, by killing with his "skene" a wild boar which was about to rend his royal master—an act of courage and devotion that received its reward in an extensive grant of land. The family mansion was a large pile of Gothic architecture, dreary to behold, for the eye was without a single coign of relief to rest upon; but within doors not a few good paintings by old masters, and some rare engravings had been carefully treasured; and an earnest bibliophile would have liked to examine an excellent collection of the classics, and to glance at those great folios of the seventeenth century which the library contained. Skene sat in parliament for several years as the representative of the Elgin group of burghs, which have sent some good men there, and may send more. He had no repute as a senator, and happily knew that eloquence was not his *forte*. Only once he essayed to address the House—perhaps nature had previously to be stimulated—and the opening words, pronounced with some thickness of utterance, "My dear House of Commons," were not propitious. "Mr. Speaker,"

I dare say, joined in the "roars of laughter" which extinguished what would have been a very curious harangue. Skene thus won the distinction of being another "single speech" orator. He kept a pack, not of hounds, but of dogs, never less than fifteen couple—hideous curs all, and mongrels beyond the hope of redemption. They were his constant companions, and lived in his house—some of the more favoured were served from his table and shared his couch at night. To commemorate his affection for those he loved the best, he erected a marble pillar, on which was inscribed, besides their names, "My faithful dogs, from whose inviolable attachment I have been induced to banish from my mind, for a time, the disgust occasioned by the vices, follies, ingratitude, and corruption of mankind. They never anticipated evil: a sad reverse is the fate of man." Probably the laird was himself startled by this magniloquence, and the inscription concluded with the very indifferent pun, "Cur non?" One of those favourites attended him to parliament, and wherever he went. "Wife" had long suffered from deafness: the infirmity increased, and her master was inconsolable. He was told of a certain aurist, who had established a high reputation in London, and determined to submit her case to him. The man of science unfortunately possessed more than the usual share of

professional dignity ; and so when the circumstances had been explained, and "Wifie" introduced, the only prescription he announced was that if Mr. Skene and his charge did not immediately quit his presence, he should kick the one down stairs, and throw the other out of the window. Poor "Wifie" remained stone deaf to the end. The laird was not unmindful of his "pack" when he arranged his worldly affairs. He confided it to the care of his personal attendant, who received an annuity, whose amount was diminished as each dog died ; and so ample was it that it secured for them the kindest attention—nor were they in any hurry to die. It seemed as if they had been invested with immortality, and an account of their wonderful longevity would be a valuable contribution to those who are curious about the natural history of the canine species. He is said to have been the original of the story concerning that inebriated gentleman, who lost his hat and wig one night on his return from a convivial gathering. With much difficulty both were found on the road-side. The identity of the hat was not disputed, but Skene refused to acknowledge the wig. He ordered the search to be continued. It was the old song over again—

The wig's the thing ! the wig ! the wig !

The servant remonstrated, and conviction was at last

brought home to the owner by the unanswerable assertion, "It must be yours, for there's nae wale o' wigs here!" The laird all his life was addicted to deep potations and late hours, and his dearest friends paid him the doubtful compliment of being "a fine drunken body." A French count, one of his greatest allies—both of them were devoted to Cremonas—often favoured him with visits of interminable length. The foreigner did not share the proverbial sobriety of his countrymen, and showed no anxiety to quit the supper table. One sederunt had been unusually protracted. It was in early summer, and before leaving the dining-room, the host happened to withdraw the window shutters, when a stream of light rushed in, which bewildered and astounded the Frenchman. "Mon Dieu, Skene," said he, "it is to-morrow morning!"

Mr. Skene, with all his eccentricities, had a fair allowance of worldly sagacity. As an agriculturist he was far in advance of his time, showed a spirited example, and was a liberal and encouraging landlord.

Of north country men who have given to the public their views on agricultural subjects, Sir John Sinclair is most entitled to notice. When he published in 1811 his 'Account of the Systems of Husbandry,' he was president of the "Board of Agriculture," long ago defunct, and his opinions were received with

the authority that belongs to official employment; but five and thirty years in the nineteenth century have produced extraordinary revolutions, and agriculture counts among the number. His work is curious for treatises on modes of culture (then in high repute) which have since either been modified or abandoned, and for the assertion of general principles of political economy which Adam Smith and his disciples have repudiated and denounced. When it was presented, its recommendations were of much service, founded as they were upon his own experience, and that of others who had turned theories to good account, and in their several counties assisted in the work of progress. It is now almost forgotten and neglected, and we have been accustomed to rely upon contemporary "reports" and on knowledge practically acquired. We have learned to appreciate the marked advantages of furrow drainage, an improvement far more modern than his day, and to discover, in the liberal application of extraneous manures, new sources of profit; but prosperity in most northern counties has been chiefly owing to the great attention bestowed on turnip husbandry, which has been of primary value there in rearing and feeding cattle, and without which indeed, looking to the prevailing low prices of grain, agriculture must have assumed a drooping

condition. Sir John Sinclair has left one standing memorial of his name, and his statistical account, in twenty-one octavo volumes, will always be interesting for reference. He practised as an improver on his patrimonial property in the county of Caithness; and if his exertions returned him little individual benefit, his successors have reaped an abundant harvest. No other part of the country has made more rapid strides in advance. At the union with England, in 1707, its valued rent was under 4,000*l.*, and now it has reached 80,000*l.*; while the wealth of the sea, exceeding that of the land, represents an annual income of 100,000*l.* Sir John's father could recollect the time when the natives watched with interest the arrival of Dutch skippers, who, in exchange for schiedam and gingerbread, received dwarfish cattle and smoked fish; and his son has lived to see the herds and flocks so improved by strains of southern blood, and the means of communication made so easy, that roasts of beef and gigots of mutton from his own county are not considered unworthy to stimulate the appetites of London aldermen.

The establishment of steamboats has quickened our energies and amazingly developed our resources. The shire of Caithness, were there no other example, would be sufficient to attest the advantages which

have been secured by it. Orkney and Shetland are also notable instances. Formerly a large portion of their yearly income—not less than 20,000*l.*—was derived from seaweed, from which kelp used to be made; and as there was then a prohibitive duty on Spanish barilla, the process of kelp-making remunerated those who carried it on. When the duty was diminished, this peculiar vocation of the “Orca-dians” came to an end; barilla was a superior article, and more acceptable to glass manufacturers. In 1833 steamers commenced to ply between these islands and Leith, and in less than ten years, the exported value of bacon and eggs alone was equal to the produce from kelp in its best days. Prior to this opening, butchers’ meat could be had for a penny a pound, and the price of cows was thirty shillings a head. Comparing these prices with present rates, any one can understand the benefits of such accommodation. I am reminded that the man who first successfully applied steam-power to the purposes of navigation, was our countryman, Henry Bell, and the experiment was made on the Clyde in 1812. He did not succeed in patenting his invention, and others, who slightly improved it, enjoyed the fruits; but the citizens of Glasgow, always patriotic, anxious to mark their appreciation of his genius and its results, raised for him, by subscription, a handsome sum of

money, while from the river trustees he received an annuity, which was continued to his widow. Sir John Sinclair, from his official as well as personal position, naturally attached the first importance to British agriculture, and some may imagine that he claimed for it too ambitious a place, although in doing so he only shared the general notions of landowners of the day, and our jealousy of other great interests. Hence he is shocked to find that Mr. Pitt, in a speech on the state of the nation in 1791-2, avoided any reference to agriculture; and wonders that the minister, when professing to review our resources, and congratulating himself on the state of the public revenue, should withhold all reference to a class which was contributing towards it twelve millions a year. In proof of what he calls the unfavourable ideas of some of our statesmen, he notices a report of a committee of privy council, "drawn up with much ability, although with such little idea of the agricultural resources of the country, that we are told *we must depend for a part of our consumption, not on an increased cultivation at home, not even on the produce of Europe, but on the harvests of America!*" "Yet," he says, "in the year 1808, as appears from the custom-house returns, we *exported* corn to the value of 470,431*l.*, and *imported* only to the amount of 336,460*l.*; consequently Great Britain became again

an exporting country, and for that year at least, with the assistance of Ireland, was independent of foreign nations for food." At this time of day we shall attach more wisdom to the views of the committee than to the criticisms of Sir John. Of wheat alone, our imports for years have been heavy. In 1830, they were 1,701,885 quarters. In 1844, they amounted, in wheat and other grain, to 3,030,681 quarters, and the quantity will no doubt go on multiplying according to the circumstances of our own harvests. The enormous addition to the population, and the rapid enlargement of commercial enterprise, have unsettled most previous calculations. Glasgow is a striking proof of the ratio at which both have been going on. In the beginning of the century it contained about 80,000 inhabitants, and in 1830, over 200,000. The harbour dues of the Clyde at the former period were about 3000*l.*; in 1830 they were upwards of 20,000*l.*; and the subsequent periodical increase has been even more remarkable. Our *general* imports have risen to so high a figure that it would be difficult to say what the condition of other countries would be were Great Britain erased from the map of the world. It pleases our American cousins to laugh at us, and sometimes they threaten us with annihilation. When they accomplish it, the result will be an unprofitable one to them; for, of

the produce exported from the United States, nearly seventy per cent. finds its way to our shores. The proportion we receive from Egypt is not less. From Russia it is greater, and the Brazils supply us very largely. As the trade with China and its curious people continues to be opened up, future shipments will exhibit a steady advance.

Other landowners in my time, connected with northern counties, have gained more than provincial reputé from their endeavours to promote the cause of agriculture. There is no one whose example and energy have been more valuable, in his own county of Moray, and in the county of Sutherland on the opposite side of the Firth, than my friend William Young, of Burghead. He is an old man now, and has entered on that sixth stage which shifts

Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,

but he has left his mark behind him, in great changes for the better, wherever his management has been in operation. In Morayshire he had a kindly soil and friendly climate to deal with. The clergy, when the power was theirs, never failed to select the best spots for their habitation, and the largest share of this county was once in their possession. The Priory of Urquhart in its east end, the seat of the Bishop and Prior of Pluscarden in its

centre, and the great Abbey of Kinloss in the west, all belonged to them, and Morayshire then was comparatively in an advanced state of cultivation. After the Reformation a period of retrogression set in, and it suffered much while the contending factions of Covenanters and Royalists were struggling for the ascendancy. Mr. Young became leader in a new era, energetically adopted those systems which had already gained favour in our southern counties, and proved the advantages which are to be derived from the influence of drainage and shelter. Forty years ago he purchased an estate called "Inverugie," all the lower portion of which, although formerly cultivated, had been overwhelmed by the remarkable sand-drift in the end of the seventeenth century, and remained for more than a hundred years totally unproductive. It was generally much dilapidated, and was not regarded as a bright speculation; but in Mr. Young's hands it proved an excellent one. He projected a village by the sea-side, built a harbour for boats and small craft, and contrived to attract a few people to the locality. The whole of the sandy waste was trenched, and the old black soil brought back to the surface. Thus restored, it was chiefly laid out in conveniently-sized farms, and the residue apportioned among the villagers, who, now to the number of a thousand, represent

the thriving seaport of Burghhead. They are hardy and adventurous fishermen, and their yearly "take" of herrings alone is not less than 10,000 barrels. To Mr. Young we are principally indebted for the development of the sea-fishings along the whole coast of the county; and whereas, when the century opened, they were of no commercial consideration, an income of probably 40,000*l.* a year is derived from them at the present time. His enterprise and intelligence made him extensively known, and the Marquis and Marchioness of Stafford, having resolved to rescue their estates from poverty and feudalism—their leading features—proposed to Mr. Young that he should act as their commissioner. It was a herculean labour for any man to accept, and few were capable of performing it. Possessing the confidence, and having also at command the ample resources of his constituents, he applied, with entire success, all his energies to the work before him. When his management commenced in 1811, those great estates were under the influence of middlemen, chiefly half-pay officers. The occupants lived in a state of bondage, and besides paying high rents, were subject to innumerable demands in the shape of personal service. Their dwellings, as a rule, were not superior to those which shelter our colonial squatters. Cattle and a few poultry filled one end, the family had the

other ; the fireplace was in the centre. There were no roads in the interior, unless some rude tracts which were passable only on horseback ; no harbours, no commerce either by sea or land, and no system of cropping. The manure was carried out to the patches of arable ground on the backs of women and ponies. Drainage was not thought of, and excepting small portions of turnip and grass at Dunrobin, neither turnips, grass, nor wheat were to be seen in twenty miles of tillage land. Every man was his own mason, carpenter, tanner, and shoemaker. The people's clothes were woven and made at home, and their food consisted of meal and potatoes. They seemed contented, for they knew nothing better, and were saved from the cravings of an ambition which longs for increased comforts and enhanced social position. Gaelic was the language universally spoken. The cattle were lean and ill-favoured, and the sheep, that stunted race which—never invigorated by fresh blood—had browsed for centuries on the everlasting hills. Mr. Young's superintendence continued seven years, and during that period these are some of the changes which followed from it. By the sanction of government, the parliamentary roads had been extended to the borders of Caithness. The county had been intersected by cross roads from east to west, which con-

nected the coasts of the Atlantic and German Oceans, and facilitated in all directions the transport of produce. The rich ground along the coast was surveyed, lotted out, and fenced, and farms thus arranged were provided with substantial dwelling-houses and homesteads. The upper portions—rich in those grasses on which sheep thrive and fatten—were laid off in extensive sheep-walks, and leased to tenants of capital and experience, chiefly from our southern counties. The old breeds were for ever discarded, and replaced by “Cheviots,” which have since raised the character of our markets. Extensive tracts were planted, tillage was greatly increased, and the climate improved by a general system of drainage. Harbours were formed, villages built, skilled labour and the elements of commerce introduced. English had begun to be spoken, and a thriving export trade in fish, wool, and mutton, created, which already produced more than 50,000*l.* a year. It is not surprising that such startling changes should have been regarded in some quarters with disapprobation. They incensed those half-pay officers who had profited by an unnatural rule, and the people looked upon them with dismay. The place of one’s birth and long residence, however poor, is sure to claim some share of the affections; and in the abandonment of their ancient homes, and their

enforced conformity to new habits of life, they anticipated countless evils. I know that a popular belief prevails that in carrying out this line of policy much and cruel oppression was employed, although in reality Lord and Lady Stafford and their commissioner were guided by tender considerations; and if in some instances those charged with executive authority acted harshly, it is unfair to impute complicity therein to their superiors. The process of removal was effected by degrees, and families which had long dwelt in mountain fastnesses were located near the shore in comfortable cottages, with an allotment of land for each. Time has happily destroyed old animosities, and subsequent events have confirmed the wisdom of arrangements which have been for the benefit of all.

Some years ago my friend established himself in a pleasant residence on the banks of the Lossie, surrounded by those who have profited largely by his example and look up to him as their chief. He dispenses a liberal hospitality, and at his table are to be found the men of the province who have become famous as breeders of stock and the pioneers of improved systems of cultivation. An afternoon thus spent is as profitable as the study of half-a-dozen essays, and one escapes from all their dry parts. The baronet of Altyre publishes in his own racy

manner the merits of his West-Highlanders, while Sandy Lawson is equally demonstrative in asserting the superior claims of the old-fashioned "doddies." Peter Brown and Mr. Sellar grow excited about their Cheviots, and each confidently predicts for his lot the first place at the Inverness fair. James Geddes discourses on turnips as if he were rehearsing a speech for the next meeting of the renowned Morayshire Club. The amiable and accomplished Mr. St. John, whose home has long been in Elgin, is often there, and his varied experience as a sportsman and intimate acquaintance with ornithology make his society delightful. Our host's young and clever protégé—a scion of the Macgregors—is seldom absent, but stringent injunctions have been laid upon him to repress his powers of speech, and to attend to the passage of the bottles. The less popular topics of rotations, manuring, and drainage come in for their share of discussion, and the Nestor of the party gives his experience and advice. He despises abstract theories, and if they are started, denounces them in language to which ancient habits have accustomed him, that is regarded now-a-days as more expressive than elegant.

George Ross of Cromarty supplied to the county of Ross the same sort of example which Mr. Young had given to Moray. Like its neighbour counties of

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Sutherland and Caithness, Ross-shire knew nothing of the noise and bustle of cities. It was more famous for its whisky than its corn—for its smugglers than its cattle. One estate indeed had been made independent of the gauger. “Ferintosh” belonged to Forbes of Culloden, the President of the Court of Session, for whose services and losses in the rebellion of 1745 it received the privilege of “distilling” without any payment of duty. Nothing has a greater tendency to excite irritation and jealousy than favouritism in legislation, and other lairds declaimed against it in their best Gaelic, but for fifty years their eloquence was in vain. Burns has a playful lament on its extinction :—

Thee, Ferintosh ! O sadly lost !
 Scotland lament frae coast to coast ;
 Now colic grips an’ barkin hoast
 May kill us a’,
 For royal Forbes’s charter’d boast
 Is ta’en awa !

Mr. Ross left the “far north” to push his way in London, as scantily provided as the renowned Whittington, and his success was as brilliant. He had the rare good sense to abandon the cares of business while he was still vigorous and hearty, although I daresay it cost him no small effort to quit for ever that busy ’change where he had won the fairest name,

and where, like William Osbaldeston, he could not help being gratified by the hum and bustle that his approach was sure to produce among those bears, bulls, and brokers who hoped to benefit by his presence. When he bought "Cromarty" it was without proper appointments of any kind; everything was dilapidated, and everybody who lived on it was poor. Only a man of strong will, who had been accustomed all his life to grapple with difficulties and to overcome them, could have been attracted to the locality. But under this neglect and poverty—its prominent features—he thought he discovered the elements of prosperity, and soon showed what the union of energy and capital could effect. Dilapidations were repaired—comfortable buildings everywhere erected. The dead-lock which the want of roads had created was removed, and the advantages which are to be derived from judicious planting, in respect of shelter and general amenity, his early operations have long ago exhibited. His tenantry were supplied with grain and grass seeds, and an oasis appeared in what had been literally a desert. At the old village of Cromarty he built a harbour, to stimulate commerce and afford protection; and on his own responsibility works for the encouragement of trade and manufactures were established. Ross-shire has since profited immensely by improved means of

access. Old families still retain their hold in some of its extensive divisions, but many of its ancient owners have disappeared. Nearly all that constituted the great and picturesque possessions of the Earls of Seaforth, once extending, it is said, from the German to the Atlantic Ocean, have passed into the hands of strangers. The large island of Lewis, from which they had driven the Macleods two hundred years ago, has shared the fate of other parts, and become the property of Mr. James Matheson, a successful China merchant, who feels that

Sweeter are our mountain breezes
Than yon cloudless foreign sky.

By the extent, variety, and costliness of his expenditure, most ably directed, a wonderful change has already been effected; and such is the improved appearance of its surface, as well as the increased comforts of its people, that were a man who had been long absent to return to his earlier haunts, he might fancy that, like Rip Van Winkle, he had been asleep all the while.

This and numerous other changes of ownership have produced the most beneficial results. Abundant capital has been put in circulation; antiquated notions have been eradicated; the best systems of husbandry introduced; so that as an agricultural

county it has acquired deserved fame. Our English neighbours have not been deterred from visiting it by Bailie Nicol Jarvie's description of the Highlands, that they "are but a wild kind of world by themselves, full of heights and howes, caverns, lochs, rivers, and mountains—that it would tire the very deevil's wings to flee to the tap o' them." Those rivers and mountains become annually more attractive, and the rents which they command for sporting purposes have done right good service to their proprietors. But although others have surpassed Mr. Ross in the nature and extent of their operations, it is not to be forgotten that his early example stirred up neighbours to similar exertions, and that except for it they might have been long delayed. The public benefits he conferred, and his acts of private benevolence, are still remembered with gratitude. His worldly prosperity had never known a check, but the closing years of his life were clouded by severe domestic sorrow, and those schemes of usefulness which he had originated found diminished interest in his sight.

Ah, me! the flower and blossom of your house,
The wind hath blown to other towers.

I do not remember any landowner in the county of Inverness specially deserving of notice, although

general progress has been highly creditable. Prior to the decisive battle of Culloden it was in a state of great confusion and semi-barbarism.

The Letters of Captain Burt, published about 1726, supply an extraordinary account of society as then existing, and of the filthy habits and sloth of the people. For the purposes of "general traffic," as we now understand the expression, there was no provision whatever. The first real impulse was given by the military roads, which were commenced in 1730, and whose completion would appear to have excited both astonishment and gratitude.

If you had seen these roads before they were made,
You'd have held up your hands and blest General Wade.

But no material change occurred till after 1745, when clanship was finally crushed, and caterans and other reivers were deprived of their lawless calling. The unhappy and famous Simon Lord Lovat, who, however much his vanity and crooked policy are to be despised, was undoubtedly a man of great intelligence, is said to have made some attempts in the right direction; and it is pleasant to know that under the mild sway of the present peer—the inheritor of his estates, and in whose person the ancient title of their chief has been restored—there flourishes on the banks of the Beaully and its tributaries a class of

tenants whose well-appointed farms afford striking evidence of the able and spirited efforts of the last five and twenty years. In the richness of the soil and their forward condition these farms will not suffer by comparison with any in Midlothian and Berwickshire, where cultivation in its best form dates from a much earlier period, and in the romantic beauty of their situation our southern friends have not a chance of approaching them. The formation of the Caledonian Canal, intersecting the "great glen of Scotland," was a valuable boon to the Highlands, and stimulated improvements which have added largely to the production and influence of the country. These important changes owe their accomplishment principally to "new blood." Nearly all the ducal possessions of Badenoch and Lochaber have passed into other hands. The Chisholms and the Mackintoshes, and the descendants of the "gentle Lochiel" still hold their own; the Macdonalds and the Macleods maintain their sovereignty in Skye; but the old chiefs of Glengarry and Clanranald have disappeared. If Providence had not found great attractions for muirfowl and deer on its hills and moors, more old territorial proprietors must have become extinct under the inconveniences of empty exchequers; but the "fancy" rents which fashion has happily established have saved many domestic cata-

strophes, and removed anxiety from as many firesides. An English peer, with a town house in Belgravia, and a box at the opera for the countess his wife, is scarcely supposed to "do it well" unless he is provided with a "Scotch moor." It is only the other day that the greatest parliamentary orator since Canning, and the greatest advocate since Erskine, respectively abandoning the grandeur of Drayton Manor and the dignity of the Court of Exchequer—probably attired in the garb of Rob Roy—put their sporting powers to test on the hill-sides of Inverness-shire. If the one had deposed Lord John from the treasury bench, and the other, as in earlier times at *Nisi Prius*, had snatched some important verdict from Brougham or Denman, he could not have been more charmed with his success. Another public man, of whose abilities we are all proud, however much some of us may rail at him, has also lately appeared in these parts, although with no warlike weapon in his hands. On the banks of the Ness he might have been seen pursuing the gentle art with a patience which never wearied, and with results which no novice could have secured. This was John Bright, bent on the capture of the only aristocratic creature whose close and intimate alliance he cares to possess!

James Ferguson of Pitfour inherited large estates in the district of Buchan, which he increased by

valuable purchases, and was the son of one of the judges of our supreme court, who adopted the courtesy title of "Lord Pitfour." A man of vigorous understanding, strong sense, and patient withal, he applied his whole mind to the improvement of his property, and by the construction of canals and roads redeemed it from its previous isolation. He adopted the best-received drainage system of the day, laid out his farms on convenient rotations, built substantial steadings upon them, and by planting made the north wind be less keenly felt. Trees in that part of the world were then scarce articles, and applying Dr. Johnson's not very correct remark to Scotland in general, it could emphatically be said of Buchan, that "a tree might be a show there, as a horse in Venice."

Far as the eye could reach no tree was seen,
Earth clad in russet, scorn'd the lively green.

Pitfour's operations did much to remove the imputation, but the rough blasts of the German Ocean are not favourable to the rapid growth of timber ; and it was only by planting on an extensive scale and on contiguous grounds that he successfully carried his plans into execution. Yet the great mosses, and the remains of trees of imposing dimensions occasionally found in them, support the traditionary accounts of large forests having formerly existed there. While


the province of Buchan was an earldom, and the feudal system prevailed, its lords were exceedingly powerful; but early in the fourteenth century their estates, becoming forfeited, were partitioned among the adherents of Robert the Bruce. Within the park wall of Pitfour is the site upon which, more than six hundred years ago, stood the fine old abbey of Deer. Its ruins have been carefully preserved, and the gardens of the monastery are monuments of the taste and comforts with which the Romish clergy delighted to surround their abodes. Mr. Ferguson's tenants sat at moderate rents, and in fixing them he adopted the old adage—

Ane to saw, ane to chaw, and ane to pay the laird witha',—

in accordance with the maxim that every arable farm, fairly let, should produce three rents—one for the landlord, one for the expense of cultivation, and one for the support of the farmer. I fear such liberal consideration for tenants does not always prevail. Pitfour represented his native county in parliament for many years, and was the fast friend of the first Lord Melville. The younger Pitt had no more steady supporter. He used jokingly to say that upon the only occasion on which he exercised an independent judgment, and voted against his leader, he became so sensible of his folly that he registered

a vow, which he observed with scrupulous fidelity, that he would never again be guilty of imprudences of the kind. His close intimacy with Dundas brought him often into the society of the great minister, who valued his large share of common sense and worldly sagacity. Another bond of union was their genuine appreciation of "generous port." The observation, attributed to Fox, as the House was to divide one evening, "There goes that Scot, who is never present at a debate or absent from a division," was said to have been applied to Mr. Ferguson. If the words were ever spoken, they had no meaning so far as he was concerned, for no man more heartily admired the intellectual encounters of the two great parliamentary gladiators of his day than the Laird of Pitfour. I must pause to make a passing reference to a remarkable man, who was a neighbour of Pitfour, though too old to be his intimate friend, and whose memory at the distance of eighty years holds a warm place in the hearts of his countrymen, without distinction of creed or class. This was Alexander Forbes, the last Lord Pitsligo. In his youth he had enjoyed the advantages of foreign travel, rare in those days, and visited the exiled family at St. Germain, conceiving then and retaining for them afterwards a strong affection. Although engaged in the general rising headed by the Earl of Mar, on the

death of Queen Anne, he escaped the pains and penalties which others suffered; and after a brief interval was allowed to return to his old castle, bleak and cheerless in outward appearance, but endeared to him by the hallowed associations of centuries. There, busied in philosophical research, and surrounded by tenants and dependants whose condition he sought to improve, he passed many years in tranquil enjoyment. He had nearly completed the "three score years and ten" when Charles Edward landed amongst us, and the old Jacobite accepted the invitation of younger Cavaliers to put himself at their head, and join the standard of the Prince at Edinburgh. The victory at Preston Pans had just been won, and Lord Pitsligo's arrival was hailed with enthusiasm. We are told that "it seemed as if religion, virtue, and justice were entering the camp under the appearance of this venerable old man." If his, and such like wise counsels had prevailed, historians might have had different chronicles to record, and the white rose been growing luxuriantly at this day. He deplored the failure of the cause, but his devotion to it knew no change; and amidst the dangers and privations of his long proscription, there were exhibited a patient endurance and heroic fortitude strong enough to extort the respect of opposing factions. His escapes



were numerous, and some of them almost miraculous. I have visited as a boy the little cave among the rocks, on the shore of the Moray Firth, which for long was his hiding-place, and had no little difficulty in approaching and entering it. One wonders how a man of seventy, suffering from severe asthmatic affection, could have sustained the exertion and endurance needed to reach, and rest in anything so utterly comfortless.

A cave where no daylight enters,
But cats and badgers are for ever bred.

For ten years a price was set upon his head. To his poor neighbours who were familiar with his concealment the reward would have been riches; and nothing can testify more powerfully to the affectionate respect in which his character was held, than that not one could be found to discharge the mercenary office of informer. Many may regret the course of his public conduct, but all must admire the noble and chivalrous bearing which distinguished it, and that patriotism—for patriotism in his eyes at least it was—which, attaching himself to the side of an unfortunate prince, desired to secure for his country national independence, and to reverse those acts of the parliament which to him appeared to be tantamount to national disgrace. There was no participation on his part in those covetous thoughts that are

said to have inspired the Highland gentleman whose answer to the question, if the idea of dethroning the house of Hanover did not appear unreasonable, was, "Na, sir. I ne'er thocht aboot it. I just ay' thocht, hoo pleasant it wad be to see Donald riflin' Lon'on." Lord Pitsligo was the last of our Cavaliers.

Oh ! never shall we see again
 A heart so stout and true ;
 The olden times have passed away,
 And weary are the new.
 The fair white rose has faded
 In the garden where it grew,
 And no fond tears, save those of heaven,
 The glorious bed bedew
 Of the last old Scottish Cavalier,
 All of the olden time.

The Honourable William Maule of Panmure, now Lord Panmure, has taken high rank among country notables north of the Tay. Second son of the Earl of Dalhousie, he succeeded to the great estates of his kinsman, of which those of his father were insignificant in comparison, and has earned the warm attachment of his tenantry by the unusually easy terms on which they have been permitted to possess their farms. Besides extensive tracts of moorland, famed for their grouse and mountain hares (which, although worth some thousands a year, he disdains to make money of, after the fashion of other men, and scrupulously reserves for the sport of his friends), it has been

computed that his arable acres number nearly one hundred thousand, and yet his rent-roll was long much under, and has never reached, 30,000*l*. It is not surprising that tenants so favoured have set all their energies to work, and that many of them have realized comfortable independencies. To commemorate their gratitude they raised a lofty pillar in his honour. Mr. Maule entered the House of Commons early in life, and there he continued until 1831, when Earl Grey, as an acknowledgment of steady political support, and in consideration of his great territorial possessions, called him to the peerage, of which their ancient inheritors were members for many generations. Unlike his illustrious rival, Mr. Fox attached hosts of personal friends, and Mr. Maule was amongst the warmest and most devoted. The memory of his friend he has steadfastly cherished; and as a fact exhibiting at once the liberality of his character and the reality of his regard, settled on Mrs. Fox for her life a handsome annuity. He was admitted to the privilege of the gifted statesman's inner circle, and was able to appreciate the truthfulness of that description which Rogers gives of him in his retirement:—

Thee at St. Anne's so soon of care beguiled,
 Playful, sincere, and artless as a child;
 Thee who would'st watch a bird's nest on the spray,
 Through the green leaves exploring day by day.

Lord Panmure may now be said to represent that school, fast passing away, which regarded old Scottish drinking as a virtue, and gauged the capacity of its members as of a cask, according to the quantity it could hold. In his day he was a five-bottle man, and the hardest drinker had little chance with the member for Forfarshire. Few men have been witness to more of those "high jinks" whose description Sir Walter Scott has made so amusing. It was a sight to see him in the hunting field, weighing nearer thirty than twenty stone. He could hardly be expected to be "well up," but he heartily enjoyed the sport. He kept a good stable, was fond of his horses, and no man supplied so many "mounts" to his friends.

Amicus equus, sed magis amicus hospes.

At one time he patronized the Scottish turf, never very distinguished for its excellence, and was the owner of many mains of valiant cocks. I daresay his heart rejoiced when, according to Shakspeare, he heard

The strain of strutting chanticleer
Cry Cock-a-doodle-doo!

But surviving most of his earlier comrades, he has adapted his mode of life to the altered manners of the times, and dispenses in the halls of his ancestors a

hospitality remarkable for its cordial simplicity. No table exhibits such rounds of beef and shoulders of mutton as that at Brechin Castle, for the peer's cattle and sheep are never slain until they have reached full years of discretion. As illustrative of this, a story is told of a visit which he had offered to one of his wealthier tenants, who had been in the occasional habit of dining at the castle. The farmer had often heard Lord Panmure talk of the age of his sheep, and the observation had made due impression. A pleasant party assembled, and as a matter of course an excellent dinner was served. His lordship volunteered to carve a portly brace of fowls which were placed near him, but utterly failing in his efforts, and abusing no doubt in his mind the antiquity of the birds, he turned to the host and demanded how old they were. Remembering the age of the finest wedders at Brechin Castle, the latter complacently replied, "Just echt yer auld, my lord!" Possessed of great natural ability, which indeed belongs to his race, those talents, if cultivated, would have gained renown for him in the senate and a place among the statesmen of his day; out they have been allowed in great measure to run to waste, and he approaches a green old age without leaving any trace behind, save a reputation for princely liberality as a landlord, and for powers of

jovial endurance such as the rising generation will refuse to believe could have belonged to mortal man.

Mr. Fox Maule, his son, and James, Earl of Dalhousie, his nephew, hold more ambitious views. Mr. Maule has long ago established for himself an influential position in the House of Commons, and bids fair to gain the leading honours of administration. Lord Dalhousie is not the least eminent of those young men of great families and promise who have entered themselves in the political school of Sir Robert Peel. To occupy a distinguished post where Lincoln, Herbert, Canning, Bruce, and Gladstone are fellow-aspirants, proclaims the possession of no ordinary gifts.

It is not unreasonable to predict, that when the chronicles of the second half of the nineteenth century come to be written, the heads of this noble house will have places allotted to them amongst its conspicuous statesmen.

Robert Barclay Allardyce, of Ury, but always known as "Captain Barclay," is one of the oddest men I have ever been acquainted with. It is not an exaggeration to say that his associates have included all ranks and orders of mankind, from the prince to the peasant. Inheriting an estate, which for situation and the quality of its soil is not surpassed in

the north, he has devoted to its adornment and improvement all the best modern appliances, and has surrounded the quaint and unpretending old mansion-house with a park such as would do no discredit to the palatial residence of an English duke. The Barclays were a Quaker family when they took root in the county of Kincardine, and the celebrated "Apologist" is believed by some to have drawn his first breath at Ury. The meeting-house still stands within a few paces of the hall door, but no opportunities for "spirit moving" are now afforded. Before the Captain set up his household gods at Ury, he practised as an athlete, and his powerful frame helped him to great distinction. A pedestrian feat in England—by which he gained a bet of a thousand guineas—of walking a thousand miles in the same number of consecutive hours, proves what powers of endurance he possessed. As a pupil in the "science" of self-defence, he placed himself under the famous Jackson, who had imparted it to the Regent and many of the aristocracy of the day. Barclay occasionally undertook to teach others. Among those whom he selected was Shaw, the guardsman, who slew a fabulous number of Frenchmen at Waterloo, and was a man of commanding stature and strength. Proceeding to give the usual elementary instruction, he inquired, "What

part do you generally make for?" "I be's a customer o' the guts," replied the pupil, in his best Yorkshire; and suiting the action to the words, instantly felled his professor to the ground, who was glad to abandon all further efforts at enlightenment. The ring has now happily lost all the prestige which formerly belonged to it. It is antagonistic to the whole spirit of advanced civilization; and although abstractly it is impossible to withhold our admiration from British pluck and bull-dog determination, we cannot deny that great brutality and ruffianism accompany its exhibitions. But in Barclay's younger days it was the fashion for men in the best social positions to patronize it, and enthusiasts were found among statesmen high in office. Mr. Windham, the friend of Burke—the finest gentleman of his time as he has been called—the colleague of Pitt, and a member of "all the talents" ministry, used to leave prize-fights with reluctance to attend to his parliamentary duties. It is now twenty years since Barclay started a stage-coach, called "The Defiance," to supply the country from Edinburgh to Inverness, and as a public conveyance it has never been surpassed in any part of the United Kingdom. He is the life and soul of it. The horses and appointments would do credit to the carriage of the first nobleman of the land. Coachmen and guards are clothed in scarlet

liveries, and except when "the Captain" holds the ribbons, time is kept with the most praiseworthy exactness. I do not know what our railways, when we get them, will accomplish, but I am unambitious enough to be satisfied with comfortable locomotion at the rate of twelve miles an hour. My friend has done the north of Scotland a greater amount of good than any living agriculturist. At much expense and trouble he has collected a herd of short-horns of the best pedigrees and admirable symmetry. The yearly sales of pure-bred stock at Ury attract numbers from districts far and near, and the advantages of crossing our native breeds with the blood of our English counties have long been apparent to all. Other enterprising gentlemen have since followed in his wake, but he set the example, and he it is who deserves the chief honour.

Palmarum qui meruit ferat.

I am sure the Captain is much too public-spirited to feel jealous at their success. The long purses and great intelligence of such men in neighbouring counties as the Duke of Richmond, Mr. Grant Duff of Eden, Mr. Morison of Bognie, and Mr. Boswell of King Causie have enabled them to form herds hardly inferior to those at Ury, and we are all profiting by their efforts; and if they are to be commended, how

much warmer ought the applause to be when we find a tenant farmer, not following, but outstripping them in the race. There is no herd of short-horns north of the Tweed, except perhaps Mr. Douglas's, which either for numbers or the true blue colour of its blood is to be compared with that at Sittyton, collected and managed under many disadvantages of climate and situation, and every year regenerated by fresh strains, procured at what our fathers would have considered fabulous prices. Long may it flourish! Its great merit is entirely due to the energy and shrewdness of one of those men who, unlike Barclay, still conforms to the simple rules and meek deportment of the members of the Society of Friends. Nor does he allow the concerns of a busy mercantile life to be neglected in presence of his more interesting rural pursuits. Anthony Cruickshank seems to regard his good fortune just as placidly in the morning, when he is humbly serving some fussy lady's-maid with sixpence worth of pins, as in the afternoon, when a score or more of his bull calves are being knocked down to the hammer of the auctioneer at fifty guineas a head.

Some years ago a few "Friends" from Pennsylvania arrived in England, and chaperoned by that distinguished member of their body—Mrs. Fry—proceeded to see all that was best worthy of their atten-

tion. Among other localities they visited Ury, as a place of more than common interest to them. Captain Barclay was apprized of their intentions, and felt pleased to accord to them a cordial reception. It so happened that his ancient taste for the prize-ring was exhibited by a number of prints representing eminent members of it, which were hung up in the entrance hall. These were speedily dislodged, but unfortunately, from its proximity, the meeting-house presented the most convenient temporary asylum for them. The Pennsylvanians arrived, and expressed themselves delighted with the beauty of the residence and the simplicity of the establishment; and yet fate was not altogether propitious, for just as they had offered their thanks and bid their characteristic adieus, one of them recollected that place with which the religious feelings of the family had been formerly associated, and begged to be shown the old "meeting-house." Although the Captain felt that his unworthiness of such descent must now be exposed, like a man of sense he resolved that he would not shrink from the inquiry. The key was obtained, the door of the meeting-house was opened, and the first sight which presented itself to those representatives of peace and propriety was a full-sized print of the memorable pugilistic encounter between Tom Cribb and Molyneux, the black,

attended by their seconds and bottle-holders, conspicuous among whom was the descendant of the "Apologist." Barclay is a keen sportsman and an indulgent landlord. His politics are those of unmitigated Toryism, and the rough handling which "the people" gave him, on the occasion of the first election after the Reform Bill, has increased his horror of a "pure democracy." He showed me, not long ago, several letters addressed to him by Mr. William Gladstone, who now occupies such a distinguished parliamentary position, in which the latter combats with admirable clearness and force the antiquated notions of his correspondent respecting the protection he considered indispensable for the prosperity of British agriculture. Mr. Gladstone's father has recently become the owner of a fine estate in the same county, and the rising senator and the old pugilist have already established quite a friendly intercourse. I do not imagine that there will be much conversion on either side.

The Laird of Ury is not a Paris, for a plainer-looking man one seldom meets. His morning attire reminds us of that school—so graphically described by Dickens—to which Mr. Weller senior belonged. His habits are exceedingly active, simple, and temperate. Summer and winter a dip in the German Ocean whets his morning appetite, yet he always

looks dirty. A small creature, not unlike Flibbertygibbet, discharges the double duties of butler and valet, and exercises no small influence over his master and his master's curious menage.

The climate of the north has not been remarkable for its brood of statesmen—Lord Bute and Lord Melville are claimed by southern counties—but a nobleman now occupies a conspicuous place among the chiefs of the Tory party, who has redeemed it from the charge of barrenness. George, Earl of Aberdeen, has devoted himself in an especial manner to the study of foreign politics. He was taught diplomacy in the school of Lord Castlereagh, and that minister showed how highly he appreciated the rising talents of the young Scotchman by the position which he gave him at the Congress of Vienna. Ever since the dissolution of the Liverpool administration, Lord Aberdeen has been a recognized authority among Tories on all questions of foreign policy. He has presided at the Foreign Office, and although we may not have found him a brilliant minister, like Lord Palmerston, asserting the cause of progress and liberty abroad, and waging a successful war against the schools of Talleyrand, Nesselrode, and Metternich, he was equally jealous of the honour and dignity of England. It would have been odd had the views of the favourite pupils of Castlereagh and

Canning been in all respects identical. He is generous and estimable in all the relations of private life ; and if he has few confidential friends, those to whom he is really known are warmly attached to him. Lord Byron, always fastidious, has called him

The travelled Thane, Athenian Aberdeen.

His varied attainments fairly entitle him to appropriate the compliment. In Lord Aberdeen's appearance there is nothing to denote the patrician. It rather resembles that of some calm and thoughtful member of the Presbyterian parsonhood. His style of speaking possesses no claim to oratory, but it is impressive, inasmuch as it conveys a firm conviction of the thorough earnestness of the man, and that he is honestly imbued with the opinions which he desires to fix on the adoption of others. Except the chivalrous Marquis of Breadalbane, he is the only nobleman of much mark who took a personal interest in the affairs of the kirk. The Act which receives his name, intended to remove doubts regarding the admission of presentees to benefices, came too late to compose the church's internal troubles, and was totally inadequate to alter the decision of those four hundred and seventy ministers who had resolved to renounce all connection with it.

It is delightful to think that this estimable member

of the peerage tries to abandon, in his parliamentary holidays, that sedate deportment which belongs to him in London. My son was an attached comrade of Sir Arthur Gordon, who fell at Waterloo, and has been fortunate enough to win the friendship of his eldest brother. On the last occasion he visited Haddo House, he was surprised to find that the earl had become master of a pack of otter-hounds. In hunting costume it was wellnigh impossible to recognize the wise colleague of Peel and the grave critic of Palmerston. His hat was said to be especially whimsical, and looked much more as if it had passed the preceding night with roving company at the Argyll *Rooms*, than to have reposed in a respectable chamber at Argyll *House*. Canning's lines, applicable to the knife-grinder, described his dress :—

Your hat has a hole in't,
So have your breeches.

Our foreign minister *in posse* relishes the sport, and seems as intent upon the destruction of his quarry as if the annihilation of an army seeking the overthrow of England were the object to be attained.

Sir Robert Gordon, Lord Aberdeen's brother, also reflects credit on us for his services in diplomacy. He has represented the British crown as ambassador at more than one of the courts of the great powers,

and gained high distinction in that employment which numbers so many acute and subtle intellects. His long residence abroad, and constant intercourse with society in the chief capitals of Europe, have completely divested his manner of that constitutional coldness which his brother finds it so difficult to escape from. In his case you have refinement and cordiality delightfully blended. The brilliancy of the courts of Vienna and St. Petersburg has not effaced a longing for his native hills ; and under their shelter he has established, on the banks of the Dee, a Highland home unequalled for its salubrity, beauty, and retirement.

Ask not if courts or camps dissolve the charm,
 Say why Vespasian lov'd his Sabine farm ;
 Why great Navarre, when France and Freedom bled,
 Sought the lone limits of a forest shed.

At Balmoral he possesses a domain which affords ample scope for the pursuit of grouse and deer, an occupation far more invigorating than the study of the protocols of the Foreign Office. An active and useful life well entitles him to the repose which he has found. He rejoices in its possession, and that he is removed from the bustle of the world.

Procul ab urbe strepituque Romæ.

There are yet two statesmen whom I am fain to

claim for the north, for their parents belonged to it, and although born in England, their sons were educated at our universities. I mean Mr. Charles Grant (created Lord Glenelg) and Mr. Edward Ellice.

Mr. Grant long represented the county of Inverness in parliament. He has been Chief Secretary for Ireland and a member of several cabinets, as President of the Board of Trade, President of the Board of Control, and Colonial Secretary. The Speculative Society in Edinburgh first gave him opportunities of improving his talents for public speaking, and his powers as a debater. I have often heard Henry Cockburn say that those earlier efforts were without any future promise; but he persevered, and few of our public men had the "ear of the house" so much as Mr. Grant. His style was clear and logical, and an elegant and copious diction lent weight to his arguments. He was a pupil and follower of Canning, whose school has added Huskisson, Lansdowne, Lamb, and Palmerston to the list of English statesmen.

As an administrator, Lord Glenelg has not been successful. He is scarcely energetic enough for these times; and although the report may proceed from the tongue of scandal only, it is said that on quitting his Irish office, he left such an accumulation of letters unopened or unanswered, as, at the usual

professional charge, would have been a mine of wealth to a country attorney.

His brother, Sir Robert Grant, was also a man of sterling worth and ability. He died a few years ago at the head of the government of Bombay. He too occupied an excellent position in the House of Commons, where he is chiefly remembered for his efforts to remove the civil disabilities of the Jews.

Mr. Ellice, without Lord Glenelg's more shining gifts, possesses far more extensive influence. He was a member of the cabinet of Earl Grey, and might have continued to be a colleague of Lord Melbourne had he not preferred official ostracism. I do not mean that a seat in the cabinet necessarily implies superior intellectual strength, but with the exception of patricians, few reach that position who are not remarkable either for sound judgment or distinguished talent. I question if there is any one, not even Lord Palmerston, who has such an extensive personal acquaintance with the leading diplomatists and statesmen of Europe as Mr. Ellice. Among the Whig party he exercises influential sway; and although ministers know that he occasionally communicates home truths in language that cannot be called ambiguous, they have profited so often by his admirable sagacity and foresight, that they must not quarrel with him on that account. Jeffrey used to say, when

he was Lord-Advocate and Mr. Ellice was Secretary of the Treasury, that he marvelled at the accuracy and variety of his information. If he had held the seals of the Foreign Office he could not have known better what Louis Philippe and his ministers were discussing in the secret chambers of the Tuileries; and not any of the daily intrigues which have so long disgraced the court of Madrid were concealed from his view. He had an eye which seemed to reveal every political movement from the Land's End to John O'Groat's; and while one of our northern M.Ps. was serenely congratulating himself on the security of his seat, Mr. Ellice would probably expose to him some scheme of Highland duplicity and cunning which had been organized to displace him. Must I confess to the truth of the lines—

No truth in plaids, no faith in tartan trews,
Chameleon like, they change a thousand hues ?

All his associations and predilections are with the Whigs; but he is no laggard. He studies and respects public opinion—not that noisy and unmeaning description which makes itself heard in our market-places, which denounces the aristocracy and smashes their windows—but the thoughtful and intelligent public opinion of our middle classes, whose education and character have made them in reality

the leading power of the state, and who by the persistent advocacy of any measure must at length command for it the assent of the legislature. It was Mr. Fox who said of Lord Thurlow that it was impossible to be so wise as Thurlow *looked*. Mr. Ellice looks wise, but not wiser than he really is. He knows many subjects well, and something about everything. Mr. Grant and Mr. Ellice were born in 1783.

It is a strange coincidence that the great majority of the most distinguished statesmen of my day have come into the world in considerable groups. Thus, in 1730–31, were born, Burke, Wedderburn, Thurlow, Dunning.

Three of these eminent men exercised an important influence on the career of another not less remarkable. Warren Hastings, their junior by a few months, experienced the fickleness and caprices of fortune in a wonderful degree.

Fortune, you say, flies from us. She but circles,
Like the fleet sea bird, the fowler's skiff,
Lost in the mist one moment, and the next
Brushing the white sail with her white wing,
As if to court the aim.

The Vice-regent of British India in those days held no mean court. Its appointments were on the most splendid scale, and princes, after the fashion of the

Queen of Sheba, came to offer their gifts and to learn wisdom from the lips of this potent Englishman. But the authority and greatness of Hastings were doomed to be shorn of their imposing proportions. The immense wealth that he had amassed in the East nearly faded away before the unexampled expenses of his impeachment and trial, for ever memorable in the annals of English history; and his fair fame ran imminent risk of destruction when subjected to the bitterest attacks of men on whom Providence had bestowed the powers of rhetoric and logic not inferior to those with which Demosthenes thundered against Philip of Macedon, and Cicero exposed and defeated the conspiracy of Catiline. The excitement it produced was universal. The place in which the trial was commenced is thus thrillingly described by the pen of a great master: "It was the great hall of William Rufus, the hall which had resounded with acclamation at the inauguration of thirty kings; the hall which had witnessed the just sentence of Bacon, and the just absolution of Somers; the hall where the eloquence of Strafford for a moment awed and melted a victorious party inflamed with just resentment; the hall where Charles had confronted the High Court of Justice with the placid courage which has half redeemed his fame. Neither military nor civil pomp was wanting. The avenues were

lined with grenadiers. The streets were kept clear by cavalry. The peers, robed in gold and ermine, were marshalled by the heralds under Garter king-at-arms. The judges in their vestments of state attended to give advice on points of law. Near a hundred and seventy lords, three-fourths of the upper house, as the upper house then was, walked in solemn order from their usual place of assembling to the tribunal. The junior baron present led the way, George Elliott, Lord Heathfield, recently ennobled for his memorable defence of Gibraltar against the fleets and armies of France and Spain. The long procession was closed by the Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal of the realm, by the great dignitaries, and by the brothers and sons of the king. Last of all came the Prince of Wales, conspicuous by his fine person and noble bearing. The grey old walls were hung with scarlet. The long galleries were crowded by an audience such as has rarely excited the fears or the emulation of an orator. There were gathered together from all parts of a great, free, enlightened, and prosperous empire, grace and female loveliness, wit and learning, the representatives of every science and of every art. There were seated round the queen the fair-haired young daughters of the house of Brunswick. There the ambassadors of great kings and commonwealths gazed with admiration on a

spectacle which no other country in the world could present. There, Siddons, in the prime of her majestic beauty, looked with emotion on a scene surpassing all the imitations of the stage. There the historian of the Roman Empire thought of the days when Cicero pleaded the cause of Sicily against Verres, and when, before a senate which still retained some show of freedom, Tacitus thundered against the oppressor of Africa. There were seen, side by side, the greatest painter and the greatest scholar of the age. The spectacle had allured Reynolds from that easel which has preserved to us the thoughtful foreheads of so many writers and statesmen, and the sweet smiles of so many noble matrons. It had induced Parr to suspend his labours in that dark and profound mine from which he had extracted a vast treasure of erudition; a treasure too often buried in the earth, too often paraded with injudicious and inelegant ostentation, but still precious, massive, splendid. There appeared the voluptuous charms of her to whom the heir of the throne had in secret plighted his faith. There too was she, the beautiful mother of a beautiful race, the Saint Cecilia whose delicate features, lighted up by love and music, art has rescued from the common decay. There were the members of that brilliant society which quoted, criticized, and exchanged repartees under the rich

peacock hangings of Mrs. Montagu. And there the ladies, whose lips more persuasive than those of Fox himself, had carried the Westminster election against palace and treasury, shone round Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire."

In the same year which chronicles the birth of Hastings, there was born in Virginia, on the banks of the Potomac, then a portion of the inheritance of the British crown, the man whose wonderful genius and sagacity mainly contributed to secure the independence of the North American continent and to consolidate its flourishing republic. It is no marvel that the memory of George Washington, in whose character, courage, wisdom, patriotism, and benevolence were so conspicuous, should be held in such reverence and affection by the citizens of the United States.

In 1749-51, we find Fox, Erskine, Ellenborough, Grattan, Curran, Windham, Eldon, and Sheridan.

1757-58-59. Romilly, Whitbread, Pitt, Wilberforce, and Lord Grenville. The year '58 gave us the great Nelson.

1762-64. Perceval and Tierney, Abbott (Lord Tenterden), Earl Grey, Lord Plunkett, and Sir James Mackintosh.

1769-70-72. Castlereagh, Wellington, Huskisson, Scarlett, Canning, Liverpool, Lyndhurst.

1778-79-81-82, record the births of these renowned lawyers, Brougham and Denman, Cottenham, Sugden, and Campbell; and 1779-82, of two prime ministers and two Chancellors of the Exchequer, Lords Melbourne and Goderich, Lords Lansdowne and Althorp.

1784 gave us Palmerston, Aberdeen; 1788, Sir Robert Peel; and 1792, the three leading members of the committee of four to whom Earl Grey's cabinet intrusted the preparation of the details of the Reform Bill, Lord John Russell, Sir James Graham, and Lord Durham.

CHAPTER VIII.

WAR TIMES AND HOME DISTURBANCES.

THE accession of the Addington ministry in 1801, and the truce which followed, made the sanguine suppose that the ambition of Napoleon was satisfied, and that his designs on Great Britain were at an end. A few months sufficed to show how hollow the truce had been, and to awaken in the minds of the people a universal dread of invasion. The first Militia Act for raising a force in Scotland had been recently passed, and when the war broke out afresh in 1803, every place of importance became a camp, and every able-bodied man a soldier. Then, assuredly, we were a military nation. Under the gowns of grave judges and professors side arms and uniforms were concealed. The professions of law and medicine were numerously represented; and nervous patients, unprepared for the change of

costume, were said to have been alarmingly affected by it.

He came—but valour so had fired his eye,
And such a faulchion glitter'd on his thigh,
That, by the gods, with such a load of steel,
I thought he came to murder, not to heal.

I was in Edinburgh in 1804–5, when the volunteers were called out under the command of Colonel Hope, who was also Lord Justice Clerk; and although we were told amusing stories of the rawness of these amateur troops, the force was not to be despised, as the French despot would have discovered had he attempted to possess himself of our shores. I did hear that there were some singularly awkward heroes in the corps at Portobello, and that the drill-serjeant had to call to his aid an unusual amount of patience. Drilling them on the sands there, his orders, “eyes right” or “eyes left,” fell heedlessly upon their ears, and in despair other words were added. Eyes right, “look at the sea,” eyes left, “look at *Portibelly*.” Stupidity itself could offer resistance, with success, no longer.

After our triumph at Waterloo the militia was disbanded, and the slumbers of men were no more disturbed by horrid dreams of French invasion, nor were their daily vocations interrupted by parades and reviews.

Some years previous to this our ancient maritime prestige was again established. Admiral Duncan, in command of the North Sea squadron, had defeated the Dutch at the battle of Camperdown, and captured and destroyed their fleet. The triumph of Nelson in the bay of Aboukir, and his glorious and crowning victory of Trafalgar, proved that the combined naval armaments of France and Spain were unequal to cope successfully with the "wooden walls of old England."

The century had been ushered in in presence of stirring events and with gloomy prospects. The war on the Continent had thus far been conducted to the advantage of France, and a strong party desired peace. Mr. Pitt resigned. Mr. Addington succeeded him as premier, and concluded the "Peace of Amiens." The new minister lacked vigour to conduct the war, which had meanwhile been renewed, and in 1804 Mr. Pitt formed his second administration. The battle of Austerlitz dissolved that coalition between Russia and Austria which he had been the means of forming, and the proud spirit of the great minister bowed under the disaster, to the prevention of which all his energy and genius had been directed.

Fox, under the nominal premiership of Lord Grenville, became his successor, and the sweets of

office, of which so small a share had hitherto fallen to his lot, promised to be his for many years. His early death destroyed these expectations, and as a consequence the ministry soon fell to pieces. A quarter of a century passed away ere the Whigs resumed the management of public affairs.

Pitt and Fox had long headed the two opposing parties, and many of the noblest and most powerful intellects, gifted with eloquence scarcely inferior, were proud to follow their lead.

Like fabled gods, their mighty war
Shook realms and nations in its jar;
Beneath each banner, proud to stand,
Look'd up the noblest of the land;
Till through the British world were known
The names of Pitt and Fox alone.

Never did the House of Commons, as in the days of those rival statesmen, present such an array of parliamentary orators and splendid names. Burke and Sheridan, Thurlow and Wedderburn, Dunning and Law, Windham and Tierney, Scott and Erskine, Canning and Grey, Wilberforce and Romilly, Grattan and Plunkett, occupy the most conspicuous places in that great historic rôle.

But I shall find myself in deep waters if I travel so far from home, and I return to notice events which forced themselves more upon our immediate

personal concern, than the demise of illustrious statesmen or the defeat of powerful enemies.

The harvests of 1816 and 1817 were extremely bad, and widespread suffering followed, which years were insufficient altogether to remove. Quantities of corn remained standing in November, and at Christmas operations were incomplete. As a matter of course, manufacturers experienced severely the effects of this failure, and thousands were thrown out of employment. Adventurers easily persuaded the people that ministerial misrule chiefly caused the evil, and much political excitement prevailed. The Lord-Advocate, Mr. Maconochie, was not a very wise man, but a rabid politician. He was the son of the acute and learned judge, Lord Meadowbank, and afterwards supplied an instance, that is by no means solitary, of the facility with which an incapable law officer is got rid of by employment on the bench. He too assumed the courtesy title of Lord Meadowbank, and kept alive the reputation of his father by a damaging comparison between it and his own. John Clerk, of facetious memory (afterwards Lord Eldin—the only difference, as he used to say, between him and the Chancellor being “all in his eye (i)”), was pleading before him one day, and making frequent and alternate use of the two words “also” and “likewise.” The judge hoped to exhibit

his smartness by inquiring whether counsel attached to them a separate meaning. "Ou ay, my lord," replied Mr. Clerk, who loved to tear and snarl at all judges, "nae doot there's a verra great distinction. You're father was Lord Meadowbank, and you're Lord Meadowbank *also*, but you're no Lord Meadowbank *like-wise*." He had been educated in the school of Henry Dundas, and shared the belief that all men who were not Tories must be revolutionists. He could not tolerate the expression of hostile opinion, whether it emanated from more select coteries, or was emphatically pronounced at open-air meetings. At such a period it was therefore unfortunate that the chief legal adviser of the crown should have been Mr. Maconochie. The times rapidly grew worse; labour became scarcer and food dearer. The people clamoured, made alarming manifestations in different parts of the country, and great discontent, culminating towards the end of 1819, produced what was called the "Radical War." Its dangerous proportions were however absurdly exaggerated, and under judicious treatment it might have been disposed of with the utmost ease, but no such line of policy was adopted. The agitation was chiefly confined to the western districts of the country, and in great panic—which, like all panics, furiously increased and threw overboard the reasoning faculties—the citizens of Edinburgh con-

templated the arrival of fifty thousand starving weavers from Glasgow, who were to invest the capital, seize the castle, and help themselves. Yeomanry cavalry—on slaughter intent—were despatched to meet them, at whose advance the weavers made no warlike sign. The gentlemen volunteers once more experienced a return of their old enthusiasm, buckled on their swords, and accepting the command of the gallant chief of our supreme court, who longed for a display of military capacity, waited the approach of the dreaded enemy. But the weavers never came. The apprehension of the more active ringleaders had dispersed their followers and restored order. Edinburgh recovered its senses, the yeomanry rode back to their homesteads, and Lord President Hope and his volunteers resumed peaceable occupation of Parliament House. Government still unwilling to regard the "war" as arising out of mere popular discontent, produced by prolonged distress and by circumstances which the mob was unable rightly to understand, persisted in treating the leaders as rebels, tried them for sedition, and had some executed. The history of the whole affair is a slur on our national common sense, and its concluding act a stain on the administration of justice.

It was long after the close of the war ere we had the benefits of steam communication—even with the south

of Scotland ; and the uncertainty of passages by sailing ships, and the fatigue as well as expense of long journeys by land, kept most of us near home. A visit to London, or indeed to the more important towns of England, was principally confined to "parliament men," or to the few engaged in the woollen, linen, and cotton trade. Our manufacturers—I speak of the end of the eighteenth and the earliest years of the nineteenth centuries—did all their travelling on horseback, and a business visit to the southern markets involved an absence of many weeks. Subsequently "smacks" were put upon the passage between Aberdeen and London. They were superior vessels, according to the light then vouchsafed to us, and there was an attempt at grandeur in their appointments. Those who took passage were so impressed by the gravity of the circumstance, that, according to common report, they previously made a solemn disposition of their worldly affairs. If London was reached in fourteen days, our *voyageurs* were extremely fortunate ; but it sometimes happened that treacherous calms or furious winds and angry waves attended them, and then the wonders of the deep had to be contemplated for several weeks. In 1822, during the summer only, steamboats began to ply between Aberdeen and Leith ; in 1826, Inverness and the towns of the Moray Firth were similarly accom-

modated; and in 1827, powerful vessels of the same class superseded the ancient line of sailing ships; and the whole north, in its people, agriculture, manufactures, and general commerce, received the advantage of frequent and rapid communication with the capital of the world. From that date the trade of the "road" began to decline, and after railways shall have made their influence felt, the race of "post-boys" will be very select indeed.

CHAPTER IX.

COUNTRY SPORTS; THE GAME LAWS.

ALTHOUGH our position was much isolated while imperfect communication by sea and land continued, country life supplied many enjoyments. Society, too, was not so limited as in the experience of that worthy dame in the west of England, who, on being questioned about her "neighbourhood," replied, "Well, we are all alone, you know; but I play, and Sir John is so good as to dance!" The pastimes of the field, of divers kinds, never failed us. One county had its foxhounds, hunted during two generations by heads of a noble house whose hereditary popular qualifications for the mastership are not yet beyond pleasant memories. Another possessed a pack of beagles. Every county owned many greyhounds, and coursing meetings were frequent. Farmers joyously participated in the sport, and the speed and training of their dogs gained for them many victories.

The ravages of hares counted not among their grievances in those days. There was little need of gamekeepers, and poachers in our tenants' clutches were without the hope of mercy.

We had all the usual varieties of low-country game to practise upon, besides the more invigorating pursuit of grouse and deer. Periodical pigeon matches, movable as regards locality, brought more distant neighbours together, and tested the accuracy of our shooting. Lord Kennedy, afterwards Earl of Cassilis, was, in later times, the leading artist. For many months those noble rivers, the Dee, Spey, Findhorn, and the Ness, contributed such salmon-fishing as our English neighbours could not then so readily appreciate ; although, fine sportsmen as they are, they have since discovered its value, and profited abundantly by the delightful recreation it affords. And even in that season when

The full ethereal round,
Infinite worlds disclosing to the view,
Shines out intensely keen ; and all one cope
Of starry glitter, glows from pole to pole,
From pole to pole the rigid influence falls
Through the still night, incessant, heavy, strong,
And seizes nature fast—

even then—

While every work of man is laid at rest,

our curling ponds supplied much blithesome and

glowing exercise, attracting such numbers and variety of candidates, as to make their meetings popular beyond comparison. Curlers' fare is plain, but no other pastime is so good an appetizer; and mighty supplies of "beef and greens" disappeared with marvellous rapidity. We were eloquent over our cups upon the charms of the game, played over again our "bonspeils," and enthusiasm rose as we sang—

Then here's to the roarin' "rink," John Frost,
To the "skips" who can work and think, John Frost.

There is another eminently national game, which never ceases to be attractive, although those only whose tents have been pitched near great links on the sea-side, and by the sunny banks of the Tay, in the fair and favoured city of Perth, can hope to become experts. That is golf. Golf and learning have made the town of St. Andrews famous; and there, during the autumn months especially, hundreds flock together to luxuriate in golfing. Men from Edinburgh, devoted at other seasons to parchment and figures, living personifications of worldly wisdom and arithmetical facts, abandon all professional cares, and give to it an undivided allegiance. They are not *enthusiasts* merely, but *monomaniacs*, and seem quite as unwilling to sit down as that poor gentleman we read of somewhere, who dared not do so on account

of the brittle material of which he said an important part of his body was composed. Golfers are not always sportsmen in a more extended sense. On the contrary, many I know well, were they to join the hunting field, would enact to perfection the character of John Gilpin ; or if they had the imprudence to indulge in the luxury of guns and fishing-rods, would infallibly inflict some cruel injuries on their persons. Clubs, putters, long drives and short drives (according to manner of playing), fill their thoughts by day and their dreams by night ; and long-suffering wives and children during their repasts are treated to ponderous recitals of splendid "drives" by *paterfamilias*, and the accuracy with which, to the discomfiture of his adversary, he approached the hole, and "holed out." But in truth the game is an interesting, manly, and invigorating one, an enemy to dyspepsy and a friend of good digestion ; and if I laugh at the rabid enthusiasm of its votaries, had I ever been an artist, perhaps I should have been as eager as any of them. Our youngsters have lately borrowed "cricket" from England. They seem fully determined to adopt it, and hold out fair prospects of becoming formidable rivals. In this department of athletic exercises I could only number among my accomplishments that somewhat savage recreation called "hockey ;" but it recalls many pleasant memories, and my old shins

exhibit damages received in its *mêlées*, which time has been powerless to obliterate.

Opportunities were occasionally open for general provincial gaiety and excitement. The "northern meeting" at Inverness, established in 1778, presented the principal attractions. No article of the Lowland sort helped to conceal the figures of mankind. A man in pantaloons would assuredly have been "bonneted." The chiefs marched proudly at the head of their clans, in kilt, philabeg, sporran, spleuchan, and bonnet. Eagles' feathers proclaimed the majesty of their rank. We dined, danced, supped, and danced again. The influence of the "barley bree" made fatigue impossible. Prizes were offered for the best set of bagpipes, putting the stone, tossing the caber, and foot races. The votaries of Terpsichore practised the reel of Tullachan, Gillie Callum, and the Highland Fling, and hosts of competitors entered the various lists. The Macdonalds and Macleods, the Mackintoshes and Macphersons, the Camerons, the Mackenzies, and the Frasers, the men of Glengarry, Clanranald, and the Chisholm, contested in friendly rivalry. But the old chiefs of my earlier acquaintance have long since gone to the "Land o' the Leal;" and much, and in other cases all, of their wild domains have passed into the hands of "aliens" of ample fortune, and some of them of

English blood. They do not repudiate all the ancient customs of their predecessors. The kilt and bagpipes assert their influence nearly as extensively as before.

Bagpipes, not lyres, the Highland glens adorn,
Maclean's loud halloo, and Macgregor's horn.

In Scotland, the game laws during the greatest part of my time have not been regarded as oppressive. Except in some localities we were put to little expense in the way of protection, and a notice, "Steel guns and man-traps set here," did more effectual duty than a watcher now-a-days with his ten or twelve shillings a week; but an untoward declaration by the High Court of Justiciary, that should any one be killed by a spring gun, such killing would be *murder*, produced serious injury. Poachers renounced their belief in traps of that description, and sensibly argued that no laird would authorize their use when he knew that some day they might make his life the penalty; so these guns and traps ceased to be a terror to evil-doers, and less destructive engines had to be provided in place of them. Within the last few years, partly from shootings having become valuable property, those laws have been more strictly enforced, and are generally unpopular. Candidates for parliamentary honours

have puzzling questions put on the subject, to which some return oracular responses, while others make political capital out of their unqualified condemnation of them. Without any doubt the game on a man's estate is his exclusive property, and he is entitled to every reasonable advantage arising from its use; but his management of it often produces serious injury to neighbours, and his tenants are severe sufferers. It is from abuse of this right that complaints chiefly spring. If the growth of game is excessively cultivated, the profits of tenants must necessarily be diminished. Questions of compensation arise, whose arrangement is always difficult; for if landlords are sometimes unreasonable, it will not be denied that among tenants are to be found the same sort of individuals. I have little consideration for those who become occupants of farms where game already abounds in large numbers, and its ravages are plainly discernible. Such farms are of less value in the market, and the owner must accept lower rents, and bear the loss as he may. Should the destruction be greater than the tenant calculated upon, and the head of game not be materially augmented, any claim for deduction does not seem to be well founded. That is the case simply of a bad bargain, entered into with his eyes open, and of which he must be content to take the consequences,

as in other affairs of life. But when landowners make themselves "game preservers" in the ordinary meaning of the phrase, and a large increase occurs as compared with the quantity when the rent was fixed and the covenant signed, it is a widely different matter. Then, through the laird's authorized acts, the tenant has been deprived of profits carefully calculated upon, and by all the rules of fair play he ought to be recompensed. The very discussion is to be regretted, as it excites bad feeling, disturbs, and often severs cordial relations between landlords and their tenantry, so serviceable to the interests of both. The system of "protection," which we have borrowed from England, and is on the increase, has been the main cause of this antagonism. It will be impossible for parliament to resist some measure to modify the action of the game laws, but it is ridiculous to agitate for their total repeal. Country gentlemen are sportsmen from their boyhood, and to "the manner born." The sports of the field increase home affections; and if opportunities were removed for the reasonable gratification of the taste, there are thousands to whom country life would be insupportable. We should be having absenteeism to a large extent, almost as a necessary consequence; and thus were one evil removed, another infinitely more formidable would rise in its stead. There is not a

larger quantity of game in the country than in my younger days, but we have it more concentrated now, and the damages done are more apparent. It would not be human nature were a tenant to witness in a spirit of meek forbearance the excessive depredations of hares and rabbits, for they, under the protection system, are the true sources of all the mischief, and have really brought about the unpopularity of the law; and although "rabbits" are not included in the legal category, we all know that more generally than exceptionally they are treated as if they were. I remember when a wild rabbit did not exist in the north of Scotland. Tenants ought to have authority to shoot hares on their own farms, and to deal with rabbits as if they were rats. What is wanted is some act of parliament to confer such power on every occupant of land; but that will fall short of requirements if it does not declare to be illegal all conventional and special stipulations in leases, by which, under severe penalties, numerous tenants are personally debarred from the use of fire-arms, or in any way saving themselves from loss when their crops are attacked. Such a measure need, and would not interfere with fair sport, and it would put an end to that injustice and oppression which arise from an undue encouragement of destructive animals, and the capricious regulations of individuals. There are

tenants, to be sure, who would abuse any new privileges ; but as a rule our farmers find the advantage of being on friendly terms with their landlords, and fresh complications are not to be anticipated.

We have changed, in these later years, the plan of shooting operations, and confining them chiefly to "covers," strive, with the least possible amount of exercise, to knock down the greatest possible head of game. The past generation were as keen and true sportsmen as the present, and were our fathers permitted to review this new habit, I fear they would regard it with disfavour, and pity our degeneracy. I share what might be their opinion, and am old-fashioned enough to give the preference to that other state of things which makes success depend upon healthy physical exertion—where, if the numbers are less, the prowess is greater.

The corn is cut, the manor full of game,
The pointer ranges, and the sportsman beats
In russet jacket ; lynx-like is his aim,
Full grows his bag, and wonderful his feats.

CHAPTER X.

SOCIAL CUSTOMS AND CHANGES.

“FEEING Markets” are one of those things which neither the altered condition of classes nor of circumstances seems to exert any influence upon. They flourish in the north, and no effectual combination has hitherto been formed to put them down. Yet all educated and intelligent persons, to a man, pronounce against them. They encourage among farm servants a migratory and restless spirit, which makes them indifferent to the establishment of friendly bonds between themselves and their employers, and help to foster and spread habits of drunkenness and general dissipation. It is impossible to regard them as necessary evils. In England they are not to be found, and in those countries on the Continent where agriculture prospers and is highly considered, no similar custom prevails. They are essentially bad, and the mischief arising from them, instead of being

diminished, becomes more apparent. Nominally they are places for determining the rates of wages, but a noisy assemblage of excited and half drunken men can be little calculated to discuss anything like business, and their real purpose is holiday-making. Unless for peculiar attractions of that kind, they would long ago have disappeared. From a farm servant's point of view, no amusement is worth the name without unstinted allowances of "drams" and horns of ale; and I fear there is little evidence forthcoming of the arrival of that other and better state of things, when, abandoning whisky—

With soda's cheerful mixture
They'd fill the brimming glass,
And feel the mild 'fervescence
Of hydrogen and gas.

There ought to be a prohibition against the sale of all excisable liquors in tents and other temporary erections; and were magistrates more careful in granting licenses to houses near those fixed localities, dangerous facilities would be withdrawn, and "Feeing Markets" would soon lose their popularity. If, too, employers of labour would vigorously unite in opposing a practice so fruitful of evil, we might reasonably hope to survive it.

"Bothy" life is another thing which remains unaffected by general improvement. Like "Feeing

Markets," it has few avowed supporters, and thousands loudly condemn it; but in spite of the irrefragable evidence of its evils which statistics disclose, and the glowing denunciations of after-dinner orators (whose eloquence and practice are not always consistent), no real progress has been made towards reformation. It opens a question difficult of solution. On paper it is easy to pass sentence, and demand its abolition; but in what manner is it intended to provide a substitute? At present, who cares to influence by good example the dwellers in "bothies?" All restraint is removed when the labours of the day are completed, and a license is thus given to gratify every vice and passion. In the "good old times," "heads and hands" in the world of agricultural labour used to eat at the same board, and a friendly familiarity was established between families and their servants; but the conventional rules of social life have undergone a thorough change, and, were it possible, it would not be desirable to revive that state of things. We must keep in view that on every farm of importance it is indispensable to employ a certain number of *single* men. All can't marry, and some won't. Nothing is more necessary or praiseworthy than the erection of cottages for *married* labourers—holding them direct from their landlord, whose influence they are made to feel, and

on whom they may rely in time of difficulty—and it is pleasant to know how much more than formerly this subject is occupying the active attention of landowners generally. But it has not been attempted, and it is inconsistent with the practical working of farms, to extend such separate accommodation to *unmarried* servants; and, were it done, it would neither increase their comforts nor lessen some of the prominent existing evils. Barrack accommodation, which is the kind supplied by bothies, need not be disreputable, or even uncomfortable, if properly superintended. Shall we agitate then for the removal of the system? or should we not do better by retaining its general form, and endeavouring to destroy the causes which bring discredit on it? In the latter case we may more reasonably expect success. Feeing markets are at the root of the mischief. Why do not landowners and farmers profit by the admirable example of many of our manufacturers, and exert themselves to improve the condition of labourers of this class? It is that no solid bond unites them. Is it likely that cotton-spinners would establish schools and reading-rooms, if they knew that at the end of a few months their “hands” would quit their employment and join a neighbour’s mill, and that this migratory action would go on periodically? When a man is serving a good master, what reason-

able object has he for leaving such service? There is the inducement neither of higher wages nor improved accommodation. It is those markets which find an excuse for, and perpetuate this unmeaning desire for change, lower the character, and degrade the habits of our working people. I say remove such facilities; let us have our "bothies," but increase their comforts. Only good will follow by accustoming the men to cook their own food; but improve the apparatus, make them feel that their situation may confer some self-respect, give them better beds, more light, tables and chairs, and a desk or two, instead of forcing on them the service of the lid of a trunk, which is to supply all the purposes of sitting, having their meals, and writing upon. And having done all this, let us take a friendly interest in their welfare by encouraging useful tastes and pursuits, providing them with some of the many interesting contributions which a cheap press is constantly producing, checking vicious tendencies by kind words of counsel, and showing generally that we really wish them well. There are some whom no friendly attentions will attract, but many more who will appreciate and endeavour to profit by them. If masters would thus terminate their present indifference, they would immensely diminish the evils of the "bothy system," and raise up new

feelings among the men, for whom the old song would cease to have much of its appropriateness—

And aye the burden of his sang
For ever used to be,
I care for naebody, no, not I,
If naebody cares for me.

A few cattle markets still retain some of their ancient importance, and the prices which rule at them assist to fix for a time the value of live stock in their respective districts ; but increased and improved means of communication in all directions has destroyed the influence of the greatest number, and the excitement which formerly preceded and attended them has either dwindled away or altogether disappeared. In the beginning of the century all were events of consideration. The business transacted at them was not confined to the mere purchase and sale of stock, and everybody who had dealings with the agricultural class was present to adjust them. Except in the more important towns, we had no banks, and these fairs were the places at which many commercial bills were made payable ; where tradesmen collected their accounts and took in fresh orders ; country doctors, that hard-worked and meanly remunerated body, improvised canvas consulting rooms, and supplied prescriptions to kill or cure, very much as accident directed ; provincial scribes

attended to tender professional advice,—to assist in the prevention of litigation—perhaps to stimulate it. Publicans reaped rich harvests, and wandering thimble-riggers found ample opportunities of practising with success their feats of legerdemain before large crowds of wondering bumpkins.

The want of uniformity in the laws which regulate the first of our social relations curiously continues. Other nations laugh at Scotch marriages, and a great judge observed not long ago, that many couples hardly knew if they were yoked together or at liberty. Were there no other than international considerations, it is surely desirable that one law should be equally applicable to both countries; for *Scotch* marriages, in their popular interpretation, are inadequate to confer rights of succession to property in England, and confusion and sorrow often follow in their train. Meanwhile the far-famed blacksmith of Gretna plies his vocation with success, and at his forge makes one flesh of those who—chiefly from the other side of the Border, for we have even shorter processes at home—desiring to be married in haste, are content to believe that—

Happy's the wooing
That's not long a-doing.

Personally I have no reason to find fault with these

informal unions. On the contrary, I might applaud the practice, though all may not have cause for congratulation. In my own family one occurred a hundred and fifty years ago, and the infusion of fresh blood was much to our advantage. "Heirs male" had failed, and we came to be represented in the female line. Although her pretensions to comeliness were scanty, that did not diminish the number of candidates for my relative's hand ; but she, looking about her for a husband, thought less of his scutcheon than of his pleasant presence and goodly bearing.

Yet did I mark where Cupid's shaft did light,
It lighted not on little western flower,
But on a yeoman, flower of all the west,
Hight Jonas Cuthbertson, the steward's son.

And having procured the consent of young Saunders Fraser, the handsomest youth in all the parish, determined that with him her worldly goods should be shared, to the confusion of those fastidious forms which ordinary mortals respect, and she would not brook. Scandal raised its shrillest notes, and arrows dipped in deadliest poison issued from many quivers, but she was strong-minded, and heeded them not. Her choice was made, and no impediments should interpose ; and so one evening her serving-woman was desired to "Mak the bed doon for Saunders Fraser and me !" Thenceforth they were known as man and

wife, and passed a happy connubial existence. No doubt was ever cast on the legality of the alliance, and their pious descendants are willing to believe that it was as efficacious in all respects as if it had obtained the ceremonious blessing of a Moderator of the General Assembly, or been honoured by the countenance of an Archbishop of Canterbury.

A class, in so far as its old calling is concerned, has happily disappeared from the face of the earth. Until a few years ago we possessed no security that when the time came our bodies should rest undisturbed in the ground. The visits of "resurrectionists" imparted a new meaning to the words—

'Twas now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn, and graves give up their dead.

And they were very active and very zealous people. On their efforts the enlightened professor and eager student mainly depended. Without "subjects" how was anatomical knowledge to be acquired and disseminated? and these were only to be procured by sacrilegious interference with the dead. Visions of the class haunted and tortured the death-beds of old women; and valiant sextons carried with them to their own graves evidences of the rough handling received in their efforts to repulse nocturnal sorties. In country districts the robbery of graveyards was

constant, despite the watchfulness of sorrowing relatives, till at length it assumed grave proportions.

Those horrible tragedies, which have given an infamous immortality to Burke and Hare, contributed to put an end to practices from which human nature revolted; and hastened the passing, in 1832, of the "Anatomy Act," which removed every pretext for their continuance, and supplied the means of satisfying the just requirements of science. Except among the ignorant, weak-minded, and superstitious, its wisdom and beneficence are universally acknowledged.

Improved systems of distillation, and the heavy penalties imposed on all contraband traffic, have annihilated our smugglers. I am referring only to the men who chiefly followed the occupation in our glens and mountain fastnesses. Although law-breakers, they were encouraged, rather than proscribed, by the usages of society; and if justices of the peace, when they could not help it, dwelt upon the enormity of their transgressions, and inflicted fines and imprisonment, there was sympathy in their hearts; while the cellars of not a few of them supplied evidence which, had it been disclosed to view, would have established the clearest complicity. As a boy, how well I remember those exciting pursuits in which the gauger sought to possess himself of the smuggler, the plucky efforts that were made to

elude him, and with what sorrow we beheld his ultimate triumph.

Smuggler Bill rides on amain,
He slacks not girth and he draws not rein;
Yet the dapple-grey mare bounds on in vain,
For nearer now—and he hears it plain—
Sounds the tramp of a horse—'tis the gauger again!

But all this excitement has passed away. The exciseman has become the quietest of animals. We have ceased to regard his employment as an obnoxious one, and he is left in peace to discharge the duties of a very monotonous office. It is Christopher North who, talking of the haunts of smugglers, says, "What more poetical life can there be than that of the men with whom we are now quaffing the barley bree? They live with the moon and the stars—all the night winds are their familiars—many poets walk their wilds, nor do their songs perish. They publish not with Blackwood or with Murray—but for centuries on centuries such songs are the preservers—often the sources—of the oral traditions that go glimmering and gathering down the stream of years. Native are they to the mountains as the blooming heather, nor shall they ever cease to invest them with the light of poetry, in defiance of large farms, Methodist preachers, and the Caledonian canal." Few remnants are now to be found of that

once coveted "barley bree," and we are learning to forget it in those inspiring potations which emanate from the "stills" of Glenlivet and Glendronach, Lochnagar and Glengrant, and surround their *spirited* proprietors with so large a share of popular renown.

I have nearly outlived one custom which once extensively prevailed and tarnished society. The change is a happy one. In moments of excitement over their cups, country gentlemen may have used strong language, and amused themselves by "shying" bottles at the heads of their adversaries, but we generally contrived to accommodate matters without attempting to blow each other's brains out. It by no means followed that a duellist was a man of courage. The man who declined a challenge was often the braver of the two, for as society was then constituted, he had to encounter its frowns and sneers, no matter how valid his reasons. If a taste for duelling ever existed with us, the fatal termination to the "meeting," in 1822, between Sir Alexander Boswell, the biographer's son, and Stuart of Dunearn, helped greatly to destroy it. In England many notable instances have occurred among leading men of the century. Pitt and Tierney, the Duke of York and Colonel Lennox, the Duke of Wellington and Lord Winchelsea, Castlereagh and Canning, all

fired at each other with indifferent success. Satisfaction for injuries real or imaginary was thus obtained, and all stains upon their honour were at once removed. Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning met near an old gravel-pit, at which the words were posted, "Rubbish may be shot here!" Another famous instance occurred. Mr. O'Connell had called the witty Lord Alvanley a "bloated buffoon." The peer called him out, but the "Liberator," after his fatal duel with D'Esterre, had registered a vow in heaven—so he said—to fight no more, and Morgan his son magnanimously offered to fill his father's shoes. A hostile meeting without any bloody results followed. Lord Alvanley seems to have been monstrously relieved, and on his return was more than usually facetious. He was a very large man, and abusing the clumsiness of his adversary, recommended him to improve his shooting by firing at a haystack. The driver of the hackney coach was presented with a sovereign, and was profuse in his thanks. "All this, my lord, for taking your lordship to Wimbledon?" "No, no," replied Lord Alvanley, "not for taking me there, but for bringing me back again!" But we rarely hear of duelling now-a-days, and the custom is dying a natural death. The trial of Lord Cardigan by his peers, a few years ago, for shooting at and wounding "Harvey Phipps Tuckett,"

excited considerable attention. It appeared, however, that the name of the gallant officer had not been given in sufficient detail, and that the man whom the Earl had really intended to annihilate was "*Harvey Garnett Phipps Tuckett*," and so their lordships found him "not guilty, upon their honour" and—rose for dinner! Lord Byron says, in *Don Juan*—and he spoke from experience—

It has a strange quick jar upon the ear,
That cocking of a pistol, when you know
A moment more may bring the sight to bear
Upon your person, twelve yards off or so.

Another change for the better has taken place. Education has made our country people less superstitious than formerly. I do not mean to say that the feeling has disappeared, but a century ago its existence was general, whereas now it is exceptional. The mad pranks and merry jests of "*Robin Goodfellow*" in England have been transferred to other countries, by fairies to whom similar characteristics were attributed. Germany had also its "*Robin*," and in many parts of Sweden and Norway the influence of a spirit called "*Trollo*" is still widely acknowledged. Our own "*Brownie*" once claimed an extensive acquaintance; and although other active little creatures divided our attention, his was the wilfulness we feared the most, and his the favour we most

desired to propitiate. What his favourite amusements and recreations were are best described in 'Midsummer Night's Dream.' They were meant for "Robin," but are equally applicable to "Brownie:"

Are you not he
That frights the maiden of the villagery,
Skims milk, and sometimes labours in the quern,
And bootless makes the breathless housewife churn,
And sometimes makes the drink to bear no barm,
Misleads night wanderers, laughing at their harm?
Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck,
You do their work and they shall have good luck.

In one portion of the Highlands "the old man with the long beard" used to be much considered. He was supposed to have a strong liking for milk; and in order to conciliate his good wishes, supplies were put out for him every Saturday evening. We think little now-a-days about "second-sight," and have ceased to pay any deference to the few who pretend to this power of divination. Our sailors would rather not leave port on Fridays, and there are some farmers who tell you that better crops will be obtained if the grain is sown in the moon's increase. I know very sensible men, for whom the pleasures of the table cease to have any relish if *thirteen* happen to be seated round it—and are unhappy and restless for the evening if one spills salt and does not throw some morsels of it over his left shoulder. But these

are harmless idiosyncrasies. We need not deplore their occurrence, and some of us may respect them.

Shall I shock Calvinistic feelings when I say that in many parishes, since the fashion of "sries" has gone into desuetude, the general interest in the public services of the first day of the week has in some degree diminished? Newspapers have dealt the death-blow to those gossiping announcements which were carefully treasured up in the minds of our country folks, to the confusion of the "heads" of ministers' "discoorses;" so that now if our chattels must be sold, or some old woman or horse has mysteriously disappeared, we have other means of promulgating such important facts than by curious proclamations by "kirk officers," standing on the tops of gravestones, addressed to hundreds of gaping parishioners who had rushed with indecent haste from our churches to listen to, and dream about them.

The poor law has destroyed another Sunday practice which great painters have commemorated. Grey-headed elders no longer present you with the "ladle" in the interests of charity; and bonnie lasses are saved those sweet blushes which were sure to rise when, either from forgetfulness or inability to contribute, their "bawbee" had been asked from them in vain. The abandonment of the custom is a

grievance in the eyes of our precentors, who find no excuse as formerly, during the collection, to "give out" the lines of some favourite psalm—to set them to the notes of some favourite tune.

To the honour of civilization, those acts of "Sabbath desecration" on the "Cuttie Stool," which excited more curiosity and less disgust than one can now believe, have been ostracised, though some ancient and truly pious matrons survive who could supply sensational reminiscences of the agonizing degradation to which such enforced performances exposed them half a century ago.

The establishment of the Highland Agricultural Society was a great event. As our chief authority on all subjects relating to cultivation and general improvement, its Transactions have been welcomed with interest, and produced excellent practical results; but its popularity has been mainly upheld by those great exhibitions of live stock and implements of husbandry which, in proportion as the means of communication have been made easy, have annually been securing increased attendances. They prove more conclusively than elaborate "articles" what immense progress we have been making, not only in the neighbourhood of crowded cities, but in districts far removed from their direct influence. The shows at Glasgow are on a grand scale; and its situation naturally secures for

them the largest influx of visitors. But at Inverness, the centre of our highland counties, are collected on these occasions, horses, cattle, and sheep, which evidence that with the growth of capital no money has been spared to improve native breeds by the most approved crosses; and specimens are now brought forward, which, in quality at least, are not outstripped by their southern neighbours. The Society has given its powerful aid to the encouragement of mechanical invention, and in the department of machines and implements its efforts have been eminently successful. The facilities which innumerable improvements have thus effected for the working of farms and the harvesting of crops have reduced expense, and made us more independent of seasons; and as I compare those articles now in daily use with the poor means at our command fifty years ago, I wonder how we managed to jog on.

A couple of years ago half a dozen men, all actively concerned with country affairs, happening to meet together, the idea was suggested of originating an association, which should unite an area much more comprehensive than our district shows, and yet not of proportions large enough to appear as a competitor with the parent society. It was arranged that this union should be composed of the eastern division of Forfarshire, and the counties of Aberdeen, Banff, and Kin-

cardine, all remarkable for success in cattle rearing and turnip husbandry. One of their number was deputed to prepare a short prospectus, detailing the project and the leading advantages which it was hoped might be realized, and to circulate it among the lairds and tenants of those shires. It met with nearly unanimous approbation; and in six months afterwards, under admirable auspices and with perfect success, the first meeting of the "Northern Agricultural Society" took place. It looked like another gathering of the Lowland clans; but the music was the lowing of cattle, and the implements of contention were ploughshares, not claymores. The descendants of the old barons were there in force. The Forbes', the Hays, the Frasers, and the Gordons; the representatives of those brave lairds who, four hundred years before, shed their blood at Harlaw, and discomfited the Lord of the Isles and his followers, were also present; the Irvines, the Burnetts, the Leslie's. Scarcely one who had gained a leading position, from his enterprising example in husbandry and the excellence of his herds, was absent. Esk, Spey, Ury, Ythan, Deveron, Don, and Dee sides, all sent their best contributions; and the good city of "Bonaccord" was the fitting place of rendezvous. Conspicuous among the stewards were the Laird of Ury, "the father of shorthorns," chewing his "quid"

after the not dissimilar fashion of his old bull, "Panmure," and the pleasant presence of "Jim Dalrymple." For that day, at any rate, Anthony Cruickshank deserted his counter, and McCombie of Tillyfour discoursed not on the game laws. The spirited young baronet of Southesk, the summit of whose ambition, as he recently announced, is to become the father of "doddies," had some choice specimens of the class; but if he is to be crowned with a laurel chaplet, this will only be after the severest contest. Gallant knights have already entered the arena, and not the least formidable are his own tenants and nearest neighbours. John Garland had the courage to compete with the "black faces" of Brechin Castle. The Duke of Richmond exhibited more than one pen of those fine sheep which he transferred from the downs of Sussex to the rich pastures of Gordon Castle; and although his grace carried away the honours, they were stoutly contested by that plucky old gentleman, Mr. Longmore of Rettie, and the winning post was only reached after a "slashing race." The noble peer of Aberdeen had to encounter, in the battle of bulls and bullocks, his tenant farmer, "Shethin," a foe even more difficult to vanquish than when, as in the field of diplomacy, the great Lord "Pam" is his formidable opponent. The fatted kine were universally applauded. It is

enough to say that they chiefly belonged to the great butchers at Aberdeen ; and as we surveyed them, it was easy to account for the distinction their owners have earned at Birmingham and Smithfield, and for the "top" prices which prime Scots fetch in the London markets. Horses, whose sires had been brought from Clydesdale and Suffolk ; mules, with Andalusian blood in their veins ; and pigs struggling with obesity, swelled the list of attractions. Why should I omit the feathered tribe ? Such Dorkings, Cochins, and Spaniards, could only have been reared in the famous yards of the Laird of Manar !

The Veterinary College of Edinburgh, founded in 1818, was another another boon for us. Formerly, when our stock got sick, we were dependent for their treatment on the most ignorant quackery. Not a few sought the counsels of "wise women," whose oracular prescriptions often led to the speedy demise of the beasts we hoped they would cure ; others invoked the aid of "Brownie," but he was not always in a humour to be conciliated. Now, in every district, certificated veterinaries drive a flourishing business, and we have long ago benefited by their professional skill. There has been no greater change in agricultural life than in the management of cattle. Our people have to be content, as heretofore, to live on oatmeal and potatoes, with tiny rations, at rare in-

tervals, of pork or beef; but the bill of fare for the animals they wait upon has been vastly improved. I speak not of the period when straw was the only food on which cattle chewed their cud in winter, or of those happier days when their appetite was whetted by a few turnips carefully doled out. They little knew what treats were in store for their successors! Hay, turnips, and mangel, to their stomachs' content, bruised oats and mashed barley, beans, home-grown and imported, oil and rape cake, as much of the refuse of sugar-works as can be collected, and fascinating preparations contributed by the hands of ingenious men, are among the articles which we now place before them. No luxuries suitable to the bovine palate are spared to induce the beasts to get quickly ready for their fate; and although this dietary represents an amount of outlay which our "forbears" would have called ridiculously extravagant, experience has shown that it produces financial results highly satisfactory to those who judiciously direct it.

Horticulture has received increased attention, and we have become great arborists. It has ceased to be matter of surprise that in the fifty-eighth degree of north latitude rare exotics should be found exhibiting in glass houses much of the elegance and luxuriance which belong to them in their own climates. Other

specimens less delicate, some of which we used to imagine could not withstand our northern blasts, are found to resist them vigorously. Besides a few of the states of Europe, the Canadas, North and South America, the Cape, Australia, New Zealand, and the mountains of India, all contribute supplies; and we have learned to regard with disfavour a country residence whose grounds do not present ample varieties of evergreens especially. Some bright spots, indeed, tempt us to believe in the actual fulfilment of that period when, "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree!" "Landscape gardening," unknown in my younger days, is an occupation which the world calls "gentlemanlike;" and men of good position make available their artistic taste, with advantage to their employers and profitably to themselves. Our gardeners have followed in the agricultural wake, and flower and fruit shows provide attractions which annually increase in popularity. "Scotch gardeners" find great favour with our English neighbours, and a belief in their superiority widely prevails, which my nationality will not permit me to question. The taste for floriculture has, happily, partially reached the working classes, and in those cases increased home comforts and pleasures have followed from it. A house in which this is en-

couraged, however mean, rarely presents a neglected appearance; and in the occupation thus afforded, the head of it finds another excuse for absenting himself from the dangerous influences of the beer-shop.

Strange perfumes rose, rose as to welcome me,
From flowers that ministered like unseen spirits.

Even little communities are having their yearly flower-shows, where success and failure are regarded with the same feelings as belong to those who contend for the honours of Chiswick. An old acquaintance of mine—a village autocrat, but whose autocracy has always been for good—not long ago inaugurated a society which patronizes the original and incongruous combination of flowers and pigs, fruit and poultry. He is at once its inspiring genius and most promising son. To his wisdom it is indebted for its laws, and he absorbs its chief prizes. His Chinese fowls are not more wonderful than his Chinese pigs, and admiration is divided between the produce of his orchard and the contributions from his greenhouse. The Doctor—for my friend has practised with success the art of *Æsculapius*—is one of those versatile men who seem born for the very thing to which, for the moment, they devote their attention.

Huic versatile ingenium, sic pariter ad omnia fuit,
Ut natum ad id unum dicere, quodcumque ageret.

We have other associated bodies. "Club life," in the nature of things, cannot make its power felt in country districts; but as those of us who spend portions of every year in large towns feel its influence, I may be pardoned for a passing reference to a system which is once more revolutionizing our habits. I am deterred from any attempt to balance its advantages and drawbacks, although one must admit that it introduces us to a mode of life too luxurious to be gratified in most private abodes, and hence tends to lessen the attractions of our own firesides. My countrywomen regard "clubs" with undisguised hostility, and I am sure heartily sympathize with that Scotch matron whose husband lovingly informed her, "My dear, I am going to the club to-night, so pray don't 'wait up' for me." "No, no," replied the attentive wife, "I won't wait—I'll come for you." Her lord kept early hours that evening! Each new club-house exhibits increased grandeur, although in their general arrangements all of them present a striking family resemblance. The chef de cuisine is, *par excellence*, the great man. An inferior *artiste* would bring desolation into the mansions of the "Carlton" or the "Reform," and venerable peers and government clerks would be alike inconsolable; but this danger is well guarded against. We secure the services of the most accomplished Frenchmen,

and salary them at fabulous rates. "Soyer" has established a reputation in the department of gastronomy which has placed him on the highest pedestal; and Voltaire would have felt that his compatriot fully justified the opinion he long ago expressed,—

Qu'un cuisinier est un mortal divin !

The formation of these clubs has nearly superseded another class of clubs which extensively prevailed in my younger days. Men of letters, wits, and great lawyers, all patronized them in London, and in Edinburgh they were not less famous. The "Ante Manum," so called from an original rule that the bill should be paid *beforehand*, was one of the latter. It dated from the middle of last century, and during two generations numbered, and helped to slay, the most eminent toppers of Dunedin. The judges of the Court of Session were amongst its worthiest members, and it existed in undiminished power and influence until, as has been said, the degenerate temperance of the age brought about its dissolution! "The Marrow-bones," another of them, still exhibits great vitality. Without unduly stinting one's allowances, it by no means encourages excess. Its dinners are held at stated intervals during the winter months, in a tavern of shabby exterior, and neighbourhood the reverse of aristocratic, but long noted for the

excellence of its cuisine and cellar. The members are principally lawyers, and none are welcomed within its pale who have not bowed the knee to Whiggery. We never had a Whig Lord-Advocate, and rarely a Whig judge, who has not belonged to the "Marrow-bones." Each member provides his own spoon, knife, and fork, which, besides their owner's initials, have engraved on them the motto, "*Nil nisi bonum.*" By an immutable law, the bill of fare is never varied. Any attempt in that direction would be intolerable. Marrow-bones and beef-steaks are its most prominent features. Once only, when I was received into the brotherhood, was I present, and I spent an evening vastly entertaining. Among the members, I felt there were ample materials for sustaining the high reputation of our bench and bar. In the chair was William Murray of Henderland, one of nature's gentlemen, the son and brother of judges, who had associated with four generations, the nephew and ward of the great Lord Mansfield, the friend of Erskine, the comrade of Brougham and Jeffrey, and Mæcenæ to our rising young men of the present day.

Emulous of the various achievements of our southern neighbours, we in the north longed to have clubs of our own, and one, founded in some measure on the model of the "*Ante Manum*," yet survives. It used to be said of the serjeants of the Court of

Common Pleas, that they were "hot and heavy." To apply the words to all the members of the M. C. C. might be unreasonable, although its intellect as a whole is insufficient to raise it much above the calibre of a periodical drinking match. Ample potations make its meetings noisy, if not amusing, and jovial without being genial. Its "feasts" are movable as regards locality, and dwellers both in town and country are privileged to share them; but that union does not enhance its pleasantries, for municipal dignitaries ordinarily exhibit more pomposity than lively talk, and obesity of figure rather than attractiveness of manner; and I remember, or have heard of, very few country lawyers remarkable for sprightly sayings or polished wit. There is indeed one member who redeems it from a chaos of dullness, but he reserves himself for occasions. Largely endowed with stores of fun and drollery, and with powers of mimicry which the elder Mathews might have envied, he supplies all that the others lack. In the comedy of "High Jinks" no other actor approaches him. Arrayed in mock robes of high judicial office, he personates with irresistible effect the character of some of our most puissant judges, and his sentences and decrees are replete with ridiculous originality. Counsellor Pleydell would have welcomed him with open arms.

Life insurance societies have become powerful institutions. Until long after I had reached man's estate we were without the benefits which they confer on every class, except the poorest. Their prosperity has exceeded the expectations of the most sanguine. The Italian philosopher, who expressed on his motto that "Time was his estate," possess a life interest only, liable at any moment to be lost. Who was to command its continuance? Not a day passes that inexorable fate does not snatch hundreds away *before* their "time;" and how many others have faculties impaired through accidents and the ravages of disease. These institutions provide the antidote for one series of the ills to which flesh is heir. They prevent the entrance of poverty into the house of mourning, and save from anticipations of evil the man whose sole fortune is the uncertain pursuit of his vocation. Everybody whose health and habits give him the right of entrance, and who has not secured by other means a provision for his successors, should profit by the opportunity which they place before him. Their great accumulations, profitably invested, produced by years of prudent management, afford to the insured at once additional protection and enhanced advantages.

Although "banks" commenced to do business a century and a half ago, it is comparatively of recent

date that their influence has been universally felt. In 1694, the "Bank of England," projected by a Scotchman, was incorporated, and the following year the "Bank of Scotland" received a charter from the Scottish parliament. The "Royal Bank" was the next in order, followed in 1746 by the "British Linen"—whose original object was the encouragement of linen manufactures—the first subscribed capital of each being 100,000*l*. That of the Bank of Scotland and British Linen has been raised to a million each, and of the "Royal" to two millions; but this increase, great as it is, bears little proportion to the enormous enlargement of their operations and to the capital actually at their command. The system of "branches," which these and other more modern companies inaugurated, has economized the time of customers, and facilitated all business transactions in every part of the country. It has effectually extinguished the foolish habit of "hoarding;" and we have ceased to search in the abodes of defunct relations for treasures of gold and silver, long cunningly concealed from the gaze of mortal sight. Joint-stock banks have contributed to the extinction—with us—of "private bankers" In the earlier history of the latter, their partners reaped rich harvests, and many of them are represented now by wealthy landowners. The house of Sir William

Forbes & Co. was the best known of the class, but it too has at last disappeared. Its respectability continued to the end. "Respectability," however—no matter how high—is insufficient of itself to produce satisfactory balance-sheets. The "account" of the Lord President cannot compare with a prosperous railway contractor's; and the money transactions of half a hundred writers to the signet are of little signification when contrasted with those of some leviathan cottonspinner; and so the aristocratic Forbes' have found a comfortable shelter among the citizen shareholders of the "Union Bank," and their old staff are content to draw their salaries from the millionaires of Glasgow.

The poor in our several parishes had from time immemorial been provided for by voluntary contributions; but a legal rate, leviable in equal proportions on landlords and occupants, has superseded the old state of things. Anticipating the alteration, charitable persons had ceased to make bequests or to "found mortifications," by leaving a share of their fortunes for the benefit of localities to which circumstances attached them. "Mortification" is another name for a trust fund left for pious or charitable purposes; and one of our large corporations rejoices in an official who is distinguished by the sombre title of "Master of Mortifications," to signify, not that his

duties are of a funereal character, but that he sees to the proper application of the income of that class of bequests for which the community has become indebted to the benevolence of departed citizens. Different classes—each having its separate reason—tell us that they regret the change. The capitalist does not like it because he foresees a sure increase of the burdens on property; thoughtful and long-headed men, as the world calls them, also object, as they predict the destruction of that feeling of independence which has so long marked our labouring people; and the poor, who have thought it no affront to accept relief from those whom the ties of kindred united to them, share in the objection from a commendable dislike to be burdens on others who are unwilling contributors. The measure of a poor law is one of the gravest importance; and now that it has fully reached us, prudence and watchfulness cannot be too strongly impressed on all who administer it. In England the subject has demanded the most anxious attention, and there we have seen pauperism threatening to become the greatest national enemy. Although the law adds to our local taxation—and like all laws of the class is not popular—we ought to find consolation in knowing that our poor secure better attention than under a voluntary system. That unwillingness which I have spoken of, to be the re-



cipients of public bounty, had caused much individual suffering, and their support was thus often thrown upon others who were ill able to bear the burden. Carefully husbanded and impartially applied, the aid which is now afforded will keep starvation from the doors of all. The Act, too, takes under its protection one class of persons, more numerous than we imagine, who, not always dangerous lunatics, are yet so mentally incapacitated as to be utterly unfit for industrial employment. Among our lower orders it is still unhappily a habit to regard insanity and the worst kind of idiocy, not as a mere disease—a mental instead of bodily ailment—but as a curse sent to them, which they are as anxious to conceal as if it involved some actual guilt. I fear there exist many cases, where for this reason, unhappy beings are shut out of sight, and kept in such a miserable condition that we shall shudder when it is exposed to view. In our public institutions they will be tended with a mildness and consideration delightful to contemplate—a blessed contrast to the treatment which, thirty years ago, associated with loathing everything that related to madhouses, and made them in fact dens of wickedness and horrid cruelty.

“Law reform” in England has naturally excited a greater share of attention, and there our illustrious countryman, Lord Brougham, has completed what

Bentham and Romilly desired to effect; but we too have witnessed many improvements. The "Small Debt Act," which gave us movable courts in every county, presided over by the sheriff or his substitutes, for the summary disposal of causes of the *maximum* value of 8*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*, is one of these. In their capacity of justices of the peace, lairds were unfitted, by education and habit, for weighing evidence, as indeed all men are who propose to discharge judicial duties without some previous professional training. It matters not whether the pecuniary considerations be great or small. To the class whose suits used to be so disposed, 5*l.* was often of more importance than 100*l.* to others who were better off, and all were equally entitled to rely upon righteous judgments. I fear that many of our decisions had not a leg to stand upon, and their injustice became flagrant when we were so foolish as to record the grounds on which they proceeded; not that there was the slightest intention of corruption, although those who listened to our reasons might have fairly enough imputed it. The Act may have diminished our importance as county magistrates, and there are some who on this account regret the change; but all of us ought to be consoled by knowing that now the miscarriage of justice rarely occurs, and the country is assuredly to be congratulated. We have profited by another Act

of earlier introduction. In England, "trial by jury" in civil cases, involving questions of fact as well as law, had long been a public right, and regarded with much popular favour; inasmuch as, in political cases especially, a feeling was created that the accused ran no risk of foul play. It is in his contention for this mode of procedure, that we associate the lasting renown of Erskine. The rule was extended to Scotland by an Act passed in 1815, into which were imported the leading features of English practice. It is difficult to appreciate the wisdom of one of its conditions, that verdicts must be unanimous, on which account the minority have often to surrender their own convictions; or else, as occasionally happens, the jury separates without any conclusive results; but with this exception we heartily acknowledge the advantages which the measure has conferred.*

There are many minor customs of our rural ancestry that are either gone or stealing from us. Even in the matter of dress we bear little resemblance to the generation that has passed away. Everything has been modernized, and our country people are no longer recognizable by an attire which was once as distinctive and curious to behold as that belonging to the peasants of the Netherlands or Normandy. I

* A few years ago an act was passed which makes "unanimity" in Scotch practice no longer necessary.—Ed.

do not mean to say that the abandonment of old customs has exercised in any way an adverse influence on the affections, but among other things, we have ceased to draw upon our poetical genius as formerly, when intimating the spots where the remains of loving relatives have been deposited. I should not have to make a long journey to read some ridiculous announcements of the sort in country churchyards. Here is one of them, where a widow hopes to console herself by fulfilling the wishes of her departed spouse :

Here lies, in silent clay, John Buyers,
To have this stone put up was pairt of his desires ;
The which his widow, Margaret Riddel, grants,
And hopes that he is numbered with the santa.

Another is in honour of a man whose surname was the same as the village in which he lived :—

In *Carnie* sure did *David* die ;
We hope his soul's in heaven high.
His body lies beneath this stone,
To crumble there, both skin and bone.

A third specially distinguishes the grave of a Mr. Pye, *Junior* :—

Here doth lie, John Pye.
Is it old John? Na! Is it young John? Ay!

CHAPTER XI.

GREAT EVENTS; NATIONAL AND POLITICAL PROGRESS.

STRIKING changes are associated with the periods to which these pages refer, whether their number or nature is considered. I have seen those extensive and fair provinces in North America, which British blood had peopled and British energy enriched, break from the common allegiance which united us to them, and form themselves into a republic the greatest that the world has ever known. In my time Poland and Hungary have ceased to be independent monarchies. A new dynasty has been established on the throne of Sweden. Norway has been taken from Denmark, and Finland annexed to Russia. Twice, the sovereigns of France, escaping from the violence of their subjects, have found a hospitable shelter in England. Spain and Portugal, portions of

Germany, the two Sicilies, Holland and Italy, have all experienced either the throes of revolution or the horrors of civil war. Greece and Belgium have become separate kingdoms. British rule, extending over millions of people, has been consolidated in the East. Our colonies, old and new, have been marvellously developed. We have driven the Dutch from the Cape of Good Hope, and the French from the Mauritius. Vain attempts have been made to deprive us of the strongholds of Malta and Gibraltar; and in the same year which witnessed our crowning triumph at Waterloo, we dethroned the barbarous King of Candy, and added the fertile island of Ceylon to the long list of our dependencies. In presence of these events foreign armaments had to be upheld, and the resources of the country were taxed to the uttermost. The navies of France threatened our very shores, and perhaps the danger was greater than we cared to admit; but it was sufficiently formidable to rouse feelings of general alarm, which neither the protestations of statesmen nor the ridicule of wits were able to remove. Ministers assured us of the completeness of our defences, and the wittiest pens were employed to make us laugh at Napoleon's menaces. There are many who remember the effusions of the "Anti-Jacobin" on the subject. They amuse us *now*; they produced grim

smiles *then*. Here is one of them, in which the Frenchman purposes to pay a visit to us:—

Then away let us over
To Deal or to Dover,
We laugh at his talking so big ;
He's pamper'd with feeding,
And wants a good bleeding,
Par Dieu ! he shall bleed like a pig.

John, tied to the stake,
A grand baiting will make,
When worried by mastiffs of France ;
What *republican fun*
To see his blood run,
As at Lyons, La Vendee, and Nantz !

We have experienced those internal shocks that arise from the sufferings of classes, and political questions of absorbing public interest wellnigh rent the kingdom in twain ; but our people have recovered from that excitement, and we have survived the convulsions of nations. Peace, plenty, and contentment have become realized blessings. For years we have been accustomed to breathe freely, and have forgotten the hard times and unexampled commercial embarrassments which terminated in the financial dead-lock of 1825. The general state of affairs was then so critical, and such were the difficulties of converting securities, that Mr. Huskisson is known to have said that we were within four and twenty hours of a condition of

barter. Peace, so long our happy lot, that its infraction seems impossible, has stimulated the growth of industry in every department; and the wisdom of parliament, appreciating the increased loyalty and intelligence of the people, has removed irritating distinctions and liberalized the institutions of the country. The exertions of Wilberforce, placing him in the first rank of philanthropists, to abolish the traffic in human flesh, which, to its lasting discredit, our government so long tolerated, have been crowned with success; and to the earnest eloquence and ability of Sir Samuel Romilly, who stood forward to denounce our penal code, that was scarcely less bloody than Draco's, we are primarily indebted for those milder rules which belong to the administration of justice in criminal cases. The Test and Corporation Acts, chiefly through the efforts of Lord John Russell, have been repealed. The Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel, finding the maintenance of the laws which affected the political rights of Roman Catholics no longer possible, were compelled, at the bidding of the Whigs, to pass the Emancipation Act of 1829. In England the measure found among its determined opponents Dr. Phillpotts, the able and controversial Bishop of Exeter, who afterwards with not less ability supported it; while in Scotland we were proud to reckon amongst its vigorous friends one of the fore-

most of Presbyterian divines, Dr. Andrew Thomson. The popular demand for "reform" had become universal, and led to the formation of the government of Earl Grey. The bill was denounced by the opposition in both houses with unprecedented rancour. Its provisions were described as revolutionary, and we were told that our ancient aristocracy would be supplanted by a fierce and lawless democracy. The composition of the cabinet might have refuted such groundless predictions. With the exception of Lord Brougham and Mr. Charles Grant, its members were either the chiefs or representatives of patrician families. The Duke of Richmond, the Marquis of Lansdowne, the Earls of Ripon and Durham, Viscounts Althorp, Melbourne, Palmerston, and Duncannon, Lord Holland, Mr. Stanley, and Sir James Graham, were influential colleagues of the Premier. All of them were men of great sagacity, having deep stakes in the country, and familiar with its circumstances; and in framing a measure for increased political rights, they would be careful to avoid whatever was likely to weaken the foundations of that constitution on which the maintenance of their own influence and privileges depended. We know now how vain these assertions have proved, and with what increased popular attachment the institutions are regarded which impart liberty of thought and action, con-

fidence in our rulers, and fidelity to the crown. The Municipal Reform Act removed another of the grievances which disturbed public tranquillity. The "close system" in towns and burghs had long been the cause of deserved scandal and outcry. It placed considerable political power in the hands of men who were altogether irresponsible, and often not high-minded enough to be superior to the influence of corruption. We hailed, therefore, this measure with hardly less enthusiasm than the larger one; and the advantages which have followed, in the general administration of civic affairs, have increased our liking for it. The emancipation of slaves in our West India Islands will command for the Grey ministry the sympathy and admiration of future generations. In its passage through the House of Commons, the bill was intrusted to the charge of Mr. Stanley, who, by his able advocacy, raised his renown as an orator and statesman; and it was a fitting termination to the public life of the great chief, the disciple and friend of Fox, the eager supporter of the humane views of Wilberforce, and the colleague of Brougham, Palmerston, and Russell.

Since these times public affairs have become less exciting, and we are taking increased interest in reforms that relate to matters fiscal and social. We have become financial reformers and political

economists, and at last have learned to appreciate the writings of Adam Smith. It is Sir James Mackintosh who has said that the 'Wealth of Nations' and the treatise on 'International Law' by Grotius have done more to metamorphose public opinion than any works that have ever been written; and Scotchmen should be proud to appropriate the cause. No fiscal reform has given equal satisfaction to that which has established a uniform rate of postage for the United Kingdom. The rates were so costly formerly, as to make correspondence among the poorer classes, when distance divided them, impossible. The lowest postage on single letters from England to the north was a shilling and threepence-halfpenny; from Edinburgh, tenpence-halfpenny, and for all shorter distances it varied from eightpence to fourpence. The world knows that the project owes its existence to Mr. Rowland Hill, who held an appointment in the department, and it was perseveringly presented to parliament by Mr. Wallace, the member for Greenock. At first, as invariably happens, strenuous efforts to put so bold a measure aside were made by the heads of the Post Office, chiefly on the grounds of the enormously increased staff that it would occasion, and of the large deficiency of revenue that must necessarily ensue; but these considerations were at once diminished by the

able statements and confident calculations of Mr. Hill, and the public became so fascinated by the scheme (which had found another earnest friend in the House in Joseph Hume, always jealous of our national balance sheet), and employed such powerful pressure in its behalf, that the government, abandoning all opposition as well as supineness, lent its sanction to the change, which has realised all the predicted comforts, and more than the financial promises of its originator. It was creditable to ministers, and an evidence of their sincerity, that Mr. Hill was placed in such departmental position as effectually to save his plan from the risk of foul play. During the high rates of postage daily evasions were enormous. Those who took considerable journeys—and journeys of a hundred miles were *then* considerable—must remember how they were pestered by the requests of acquaintances to be the medium of their correspondence. Country carriers and guards of stage-coaches, benefiting largely by this contraband practice, eagerly aided in its encouragement, and the Post Office was robbed in every direction.

It had long been the opinion of many shrewd observers and sound thinkers that a revision of our commercial tariff and general system of taxation was called for. As I have already remarked, it is of

comparatively recent date that the nation has given much attention to the writings of Adam Smith. His real fame has been posthumous, and the work with which we chiefly associate it fell still-born from the press so long ago as 1776. When he died, an impression was created by his death inferior to that which we are accustomed to accord to some popular preacher of provincial repute, or to a fluent member of the bar. If he rang the death knell of monopolies, it is only lately that we have been discharging the office of executioners. The merit of dealing in earnest with the subject belongs to Sir Robert Peel, who imparted to it all the influence of high office, and the authority of his prescient understanding. Cotton industry alone excepted, every trade seemed to consider that it was interested in perpetuating a system of protection. Until Peel became premier, no minister of the crown had held views so identified with free trade as Mr. Huskisson, who contended for them nearly single-handed. There are many who remember the howl which was raised more than twenty years ago, when he proposed to remove the *prohibitive* duty on silks, and to substitute a *protective* one of thirty per cent. The class immediately affected exhibited an alarm quite as great as my agricultural brethren have been displaying during these agitating discussions on the

Corn Laws; yet such has been the change in public opinion, from the proved groundlessness of the fears then created, that on Sir Robert Peel reducing that protection to ten per cent., the proposal was received with favour in most quarters, and with little real uneasiness in any.

The return of Sir Robert Peel to office in 1841, backed by a powerful parliamentary majority, witnessed the introduction of financial reforms that terminated the reign of minor monopolies, and were the precursors of others which carried confusion into the ranks of the Tory party. As far as related to the *direct* taxation of the country, there was not so much to complain of. The house and window taxes had long been unpopular, and constant agitation has relieved us of both; but the system of *indirect* taxation was very general and very grievous. The operation of the Corn Laws increased the price of bread. The price of butchers' meat was maintained at a high figure, because those countries nearest to us were entirely prohibited from sending us supplies. The rivers of Holland and Norway were closed as far as we were concerned. Payment of large duties enhanced in value the fruits of France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Belgium. "Taxation" seemed omnipresent. If we built a house its pressure was felt, for unless it were of stone, all its prominent materials

contributed to the resources of the national revenue. Bricks, glass, iron, and wood, swelled the list of articles; and the very appearance and comforts of innumerable dwellings were, in consequence of this and of the window tax, disastrously interfered with. We could not clothe ourselves without discovering the universality of the system. Tea, coffee, sugar, from our colonies and dependencies, were subjected to heavy duties at the custom-house, and the introduction of foreign sugar was totally prohibited. The Navigation Laws, which make the transit of manufactured goods to other parts of the world, and of those articles that we receive in return, unnecessarily expensive, have as yet withstood the persistent assaults of public opinion; but they must share the common fate, although shipowners stand aghast and contemplate utter ruin!

The budget of 1842 was introduced by the minister with all that clearness of statement and copious diction in which none approached him. It forced itself on the approval of the opposition, but was received by many of his own followers with distrust and apprehension. Their suspicions were awakened, they remembered the history of Catholic emancipation, and foretold, not untruly, what was to be the course of later events. Lord Melbourne's government had been defeated the preceding year on a motion to

impose on foreign corn a fixed duty of eight shillings per quarter, and now Sir Robert Peel proposed a modification of the sliding scale of duty, which had existed since 1828. The admission of foreign cattle and other live stock, salmon, and fruit, although it has proved less damaging than wise men predicted, was likewise strongly though unsuccessfully opposed; but the numerous articles on which taxation was either reduced or abandoned, gave such general satisfaction, that for the first time in the history of the country little unpopularity attended the imposition of an income tax. As yet he contemplated no further alteration in the Corn Laws, and it was reserved for the Whigs at a still more recent date to reduce the duty on colonial sugar, to open the markets for foreign supply, and by the prospective application of the measure, finally to abolish protection altogether. Since the days of parliamentary reform, nothing has equalled the excitement and agitation which attached to the question of the "Corn Laws." Mr. Charles Villiers had frequently brought the subject before parliament, with a view to some radical change; and although he had enforced his opinions with clearness and ability, and elicited those of leading members, it was not until the era of the "Anti-Corn-Law League," which advocated no half measures, and early exhibited great cohesive

power, that it commanded that universal interest and attention which parliamentary debates had failed to secure. It is hardly to be wondered at that as a class we were full of fear as regarded the future. The agricultural interest, it is true, often grumbled and complained, but it had immensely advanced in wealth and influence under a system of protection ; and it was perhaps only another instance of British caution, that we preferred its continuance to what at best was a speculative substitution. The agitation itself was conducted with admirable sense and ability. If its leaders were styled "demagogues," their tactics and operations were not borrowed from those other men to whom this term of reproach is usually applied. As a rule, they were careful how they appealed to the evil passions of mankind ; and they possessed a power of marshalling facts, and drawing from them results so inevitable, that the process of conversion proceeded at a remarkable ratio. Men were driven to the belief that mischief followed from the great fluctuation in prices which the old law led to ; that when our harvests were below an average, or uncertain, they caused the rates of interest to rise and the wages of the people to fall, while those diminished wages had to purchase dearer food ; and if they were not agriculturists they could not help perceiving that the exclusion of foreign corn necessarily

made prices low, and labour proportionally so, in those countries which most largely produced it; thus rendering it impossible for our manufacturers to compete with theirs, and likewise creating a barrier to the importation of their goods into those states which had nothing but grain to offer in return.

We are sometimes told that battles, such as these questions imply, must be fought in parliament, and that the public meetings of the country are, after all, only holiday makings; but if this is generally correct, there have been striking exceptions. The House of Lords refused to concede the claims of Roman Catholics, and then recognized them. It threw out the Reform Bill, and in a few months afterwards passed it. These affirmative decisions did not follow because the speeches of peers were in the one instance more powerful and eloquent than in the other, but were entirely owing to the expression of public opinion at great meetings in our leading towns and throughout the country being so strong and decided, that it was deemed impolitic any longer to oppose it. It rarely happens that the gifts of logic and oratory are found united as in the examples of Richard Cobden and John Bright; and it is not surprising that, exercised as they have been in a cause so popular, their possessors acquired a commanding influence over their countrymen at

large. I have said that they commendably abstained from any unreasonable appeals to the passions of their audience ; but I have always protested against a habit which seemed to grow upon them, of turning into ridicule everybody who belonged to the agricultural party. They affected to regard our landed aristocracy and gentry as little superior in intellectual strength to the bullocks we sent to market, and spoke of us as if we had been suffering from some general softening of the brain. They chose to forget that agriculture as an occupation was no longer of that mere routine and mechanical kind which belonged to it in former days ; that its course, especially during the past fifty years, though often silent, had always been progressive ; and that more recently it had received a new birth by the aid of science extensively enlisted and most intelligently applied. Both in remote and contemporary history we have examples of noted agriculturists being great pillars in the state. Twice was Cincinnatus called from the plough to assume the duties of dictator at Rome. Cato, the able and versatile censor, is principally known to us through his treatise, '*De re Rustica.*' It is not long ago that a "bucolic intellect," represented by Lord Althorp, led with applause the deliberations of the Commons in times as exciting as the present. They ought to recollect that the most

successful members of their own class evince the utmost anxiety to be enrolled among our number; that the prudent merchant and manufacturer does not lay out his realized capital in the enlargement of the field of his operations, or in the increase of his spinning-jennies, but that he is constantly seeking employment for it in landed investments. Wherefore, then, this persistent attempt to depreciate our capacity? Let them at least have some respect for the feelings of their posterity. The next generation may possibly find a descendant of Mr. Cobden judging fat stock at Smithfield, and another John Bright a master of foxhounds in Warwickshire!

CHAPTER XII.

THE PRESS; SCIENTIFIC AND LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS.

NEWSPAPERS, if not a new institution in my day, were of small consideration when I first made their acquaintance. Of all topics, parliamentary intelligence possesses the greatest interest for the general public, and a hundred years ago its chief source was found in the 'Gentleman's Magazine.' We are told that in 1737 Dr. Samuel Johnson was employed by the publisher to write the speeches of our senators. The privileges of parliament made it unsafe to present them without some disguise, and accordingly both country and statesmen appeared under feigned names. It is said that the lexicographer was supplied with notes, not always ample, and that he had occasionally to find arguments as well as eloquence both for ministers and the opposition. The change that has followed is not less important

than surprising. "Reporting" has long represented a separate department of honourable employment, and many belonging to it have risen to eminence. Lord Campbell found occupation on Perry's staff; for a time Serjeant Talfourd, the distinguished author of 'Ion,' and Stephen, the friend and coadjutor of Wilberforce, were similarly engaged; and a few have been summoned from the "gallery" to fill the editorial chairs of the 'Times' and other great papers. The intelligence of the corps is universally acknowledged, and in rapidity and correctness its work steadily advances. There is no more difficult part of it than the process of condensation. One of Cobbett's speeches occupied thirteen hours in the delivery. Had it been printed *verbatim*, all the columns of the 'Times' would not have sufficed to contain it, but this effort of the proprietor of the 'Weekly Political Register' received the distinction of no such monopoly. Every provincial newspaper has its "reporter;" and if local orators chose to be honest, they would admit how largely indebted they are for the condition in which their addresses are presented. Few men have contributed more to the elevated position which the newspaper press occupies than Mr. Perry, a native of Banff, whose name is honourably associated with the 'Morning Chronicle' in its palmiest days. In the last century, and during

some years of the present one, we had no *free* press, properly so called. The Edinburgh newspapers then consisted of the 'Caledonian Mercury,' the 'Courant,' and the 'Advertiser,' and merely echoed the opinions of the Tory statesmen of the time: independent action would have been resented to their discomfiture. The 'Mercury' has long abandoned its first love, and become an influential advocate of progress; but the 'Courant' and 'Advertiser' have been guilty of no infidelity of the kind, and although devoted to "party," there is no servile worship of it. Those who conduct them must blush when reminded of the fetters which enslaved their early predecessors. The 'Courant' is an especial favourite with steady-going country gentlemen, who accept its articles as their political guide. In 1817 the 'Scotsman' made its appearance, and valiantly set at defiance the restrictions which had disgraced the sources of our public information—a sure sign that "the liberty of the press" was no longer to be trammelled. In its younger days it performed its part well, and now, flourishing vigorously, fills a leading place among our weekly journals. But in the north we had previously owned newspapers of our own. The towns of Aberdeen, Elgin, and Inverness, each had its "paper," diminutive indeed in size, and miserable for the intelligence conveyed, although sufficient to

prolong their vitality. The 'Aberdeen Journal' will shortly celebrate its centenary. It was established by a gentleman of the name of Chalmers, whose representative in the fourth generation still conducts it with much respectability, and with advantage to the district. Avoiding with remarkable agility, considering its great age and numberless provocations, all questions, general or local, of a polemical nature, it has fulfilled the object of its mission, by becoming an excellent channel for interesting information, and an advertising medium of great authority.

It has been well said that the method of conveying information periodically, by means of newspapers, to the various classes, is one of the real advantages effected by modern civilization. In their remoter history, the circulation of newspapers was inconsiderable. Then they were a luxury of which the rich alone could partake. Years elapsed before they reached the tables of the middle class, and now they are regarded by everybody as one of the necessities of life. Their present influence contrasts strikingly with the state of things in the days of the 'Gentleman's Magazine.' The country has incurred deep obligations for the sound information which they communicate on public affairs, and for the assistance thus afforded in leading to a correct and clear

judgment respecting them. They have destroyed that antagonism of classes which has often produced danger and discontent, and conduced to a strong feeling of union and good will among all. Formerly the labouring population, when in a condition of suffering, had no opportunities of accurately ascertaining the causes which led to it. Their ignorance produced unmeaning acts of violence, and riotous and disaffected conduct; whereas now, when the days of trade-stagnation do arrive, they are told, truly and distinctly, what influences have brought them about, and by what others they shall probably be terminated. The secret of the great success and influence of the public press of the present day lies in its perfect independence. A newspaper proved to be corrupt would die of starvation in a week. It does not follow that there should exist, between a man and his newspaper, an entire or even partial partnership of opinion, but then we are compelled to respect the ability with which its views are put forward. There are thousands of men altogether qualified for arriving at satisfactory conclusions without this aid, on great questions; but how many more thousands are there whom those luminous expositions, especially in the leading London journals, instruct, enlighten, and convert. Very little conversion goes on within the walls of parliament.

"Whippers-in" can supply on the first night of a great debate just as correct an approximation of the numbers in the division, as a week later, when our best orators have exhausted all their powers of speech and logic, unless indeed some sensational "leader" should meanwhile appear in the columns of the 'Thunderer,' to be spread over the length and breadth of the land. Then sensitive senators suddenly get uneasy. They canvass its probable effect on their constituents, become conscientious and independent, and finally appear in a strange lobby. A short article in the 'Times' has, before now, decided the fate of a minister, or changed the policy of administration. Is it without reason then, that the "press" has been called the "fourth estate" of the realm? Taxation presses heavily upon our newspapers. Each copy that is published, each advertisement, is subject to it; and the paper on which they are printed contributes largely to the income of the excise, yet their growth and prosperity go on increasing.* The 'Times' is a prominent institution among us, and its establishment one of the many wonderful sights which London supplies to the world. Thousands upon thousands of copies are daily despatched from "Printing-house Square;" intelligence the newest, and of manifold description,

* These taxes have since been repealed.—Ed.

set forth by the ablest writers, and collected at marvellous expense, fills the paper; and its arrival is hailed in the cities of Calcutta and New York with an interest hardly inferior to that which it commands from our mercantile community and the Queen's ministers in Downing Street. Every capital in Europe feels and acknowledges its power. Wherever civilization has reached, there, in close attendance, is to be found the 'Times.' The introduction of "steam printing" we owe to the foresight and sagacity of the proprietors of that journal. Its application is now universal, and without its aid it would have been utterly impossible to throw off impressions sufficient for the daily demand.

As connected with the "press," in another sense the century has been remarkable for its literary activity, and the cheap and popular form in which, of later years, fresh editions of former works and new publications have been presented, makes ignorance no longer excusable. It is impossible to doubt that great benefits have been disseminated. I know that in rural districts, twenty years ago, it was rare to meet a man, in any branch of agricultural employment, whose knowledge carried him much beyond the history of his parish. All of them could read and write, but the accomplishment was seldom put in practice. The cost of books in fact made general

information impossible, and those who had the desire were without the means of gratifying it. The only *poetry* with which our country people were then familiar, consisted of the Psalms of David, in metre, and some of Burns's most popular songs; and I am not sure that the range of our schoolmasters was much more extensive. The writings of Scott and Byron, Campbell and Southey, were sealed to them. With novelists they had scarcely any acquaintance, and except to those who happened to pick up for a trifle a stray volume, the names of Smollett, Fielding, Sterne, and Goldsmith, sounded as strange as if they had belonged to heathen mythology. Neither was there among them any historical knowledge, properly so-called. Such as they possessed was fragmentary, and partly fabulous. They could form little idea of political antecedents and consequences, in relation to great events. They had heard of Robert Bruce, and Bannockburn, and Sir William Wallace; perhaps of Flodden; of Queen Mary and John Knox, the pious Covenanters and the bloody Claverhouse, Prince Charlie and Culloden, George III. and Napoleon Bonaparte. We see now, that as books and periodicals have multiplied, the increase of readers has been in proportion. "Cheapness" is the favourite cry of the age. Cheap food, cheap cotton, cheap raw material of every kind, cheap fares, cheap books,

have all contributed to prosperity and to the comforts and amenities of life. Foremost among those who supply us with interesting information weekly, and who have given an impulse to the general taste for reading, I ought not to omit mention of our able and indefatigable friends, William and Robert Chambers of Edinburgh.

To our countryman Sir David Brewster belongs the honour of founding the "British Association," of which the first meeting was held at York, in 1831. Its object has been to encourage the progress of scientific inquiry, by bringing the savants of Europe together to propound their views, and make known the results of their research. Since then, other great towns have welcomed with enthusiasm the annual gathering of this learned congress. The various sections into which it is divided embrace a wide range of subjects, and with some of them the unlettered have no claim to meddle, such as those abstruse calculations that occupy the attention of profound philosophers deep in the sciences of mathematics and physics; but there are others relating to zoology, botany, and geography, which excite general interest. Perhaps the section of "geology" has aroused most attention. From it has emanated much information, startling from its novelty, and yet so impressively conveyed, that we have been forced

to accept its truthfulness. "Mechanical science" attracts the notice of the intelligent and plodding artisan, and he receives from its published accounts useful guidance and practical aid. Hundreds, from all corners of the island, are forward to communicate theories, as well as facts, in the department of "economic science and statistics;" while we who till the ground eagerly peruse whatever belongs to "chemistry," which for a quarter of a century has stimulated our improvements and been our constant and powerful ally.

There is a separate branch of literary investigation I am reminded of, which, if it does not create very general interest, at least attaches very earnest students. We have had several societies, or "clubs," as their promoters prefer calling them, during this century, dedicated to archæological inquiry, which used periodically to supply printed accounts of their "proceedings." Antiquarians have, in great measure, ceased to be regarded by the vulgar as merely an eccentric and speculative species, devoted, without any accredited purpose, to the exhumation of ancient remains, and the resuscitation of events forgotten in the revolutions of centuries. The "Roxburgh," "Maitland," "Abbotsford," and "Bannatyne," are the best known of these clubs. The "Bannatyne," once enlivened by the active membership of Sir Walter

Scott, is exhibiting symptoms of approaching dissolution; but in the "Spalding Club," established a few years ago at Aberdeen, we recognize another representative which promises to sustain its early vigour, and to enlarge the field and increase the interest of such inquiries. The "Spalding" has been fortunate in securing the valuable co-operation of accomplished men and eminent antiquarians, like Mr. Patrick Chalmers, Mr. Thomson of Banchory, Mr. Cosmo Innes, and Mr. Joseph Robertson, but the indefatigable secretary, Mr. Stuart, is its chief mainstay. No labour frightens him. His researches are conducted with the eagerness of a gold-digger, and he disentombs the contents of our charter chests with a satisfaction as lively as if artistic treasures were being rescued from the ruins of Nineveh. He enlightens us on our family histories, and supplies us with family episodes, to the gratification of our pride and the increase of our self-importance. The mustiest parchments and manuscripts, hieroglyphical in the eyes of the uninitiated, are made to disclose matter amusing even to those who love to sneer at all investigations of the sort; and more recently he has been giving us new lessons in regard to those curious cairns, stone monuments, and sculptured stones of prehistoric periods, abounding in that part of the country which extends from Largo

in Fife to the coast of Sutherland, and marks the ancient occupation of the Pictish race. The uneducated classes still regard these remains with that superstitious dread which makes careful avoidance of their neighbourhood except during daylight ; and other classes, including many antiquarians, shared the common belief that Druidical circles were places of religious and political assembly. But Mr. Stuart negatives this supposition, and by a train of lucid statement and exposition, draws us along with him to the conclusion that they are enclosing lines of graves, and that single stones are sepulchral monuments raised in commemoration of persons of distinction in pagan times. The learned secretary has too much penetration and knowledge to be easily "taken in." Any such attempt he resents with a cynic severity worthy of Diogenes. Not that he is to be confounded with the ordinary disciples of that philosopher, for those who know him best value the unaffected simplicity of his manner, and the kindly sentiments which animate him in social intercourse.

CHAPTER XIII.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY.

IF the statesmen of the nineteenth century have removed political disabilities from one portion of our fellow-subjects, increased the representation of the people, reformed our municipal corporations, extinguished the reign of slavery in our colonies, made wise provision for the care of the poor at home, and cheapened the price of bread ; if our social comforts have been improved by the aid of science and the efforts of philanthropy, and we have enjoyed the benefits which a free and intelligent public press confers ; we are indebted for the fabulous growth of our manufactures, the development of other sources of industry, and the general spread of commerce, to the genius of two men whose names must always be notably associated with our national greatness.

The inventions of James Watt and Richard Arkwright, who were born nearly at the same time,

had the closest and most influential bearing on each other. Watt was a native of Greenock, coming, unlike most wise men, from the *west*. Sir Walter Scott expresses our obligations to him in terms far more eloquent and impressive than I can offer. "His genius discovered the means of multiplying our national resources in a degree perhaps even beyond his own stupendous powers of calculation and combination ; bringing the treasures of the abyss to the summit of the earth ; giving the feeble arm of man the momentum of an afrite ; commanding manufactures to arise, as the rod of the prophet produced water in the desert ; and affording the means of dispensing with that time and tide which wait for no man, and of sailing without that wind which defied the commands and threats of Xerxes himself. This potent commander of the elements, this abridger of time and space, this magician whose cloudy machinery has produced a change in the world, the effects of which, extraordinary as they are, are perhaps only now beginning to be felt, was perhaps not only the most profound man of science, the most successful combiner of power and calculator of numbers as adapted to practical purposes, was not only one of the most generally well-informed, but one of the best and kindest of human beings !" Sir Richard Arkwright commenced life as assistant to a barber, an occu-

pation with which genius is not disinclined to connect itself. The father of Jeremy Taylor, the famous Irish prelate, shaved for a penny at Cambridge; and the son of another barber in the cathedral town of Canterbury became Lord Tenterden and Chief Justice of England. I do not know if Allan Ramsay, the author of the 'Gentle Shepherd,' pursued this branch, but at any rate he was attached to the kindred calling of wig-making. With the name of Arkwright we habitually associate the "spinning-jenny." This is scarcely correct, as that machine, in itself very imperfect, was the invention of a carpenter, Hargraves, and its real value was made available by the admirable contrivance of Arkwright's "spinning-frame." Many additional improvements, following upon his invention, have been adopted, and although his patents were successfully disputed in his lifetime, we accord to him now all the posthumous glory to which they so well entitle him.

George Stephenson has been teaching us new lessons in the application of the steam-engine, and already his living reputation is not inferior to Watt's. We all know how his assertions were mocked at, how manfully he defended them, and how truly they have come to pass. Such a man, conscious of his own great powers, could well afford to wait, and laugh to scorn the calumnies of jealous detractors.

Although engineering has been a distinct profession in England for a hundred years, it was of little comparative consideration until Watt, and more recently, Stephenson, rose up to enlighten us. In 1818 the Institution of Civil Engineers was founded, "for facilitating the acquirement of professional knowledge, and for promoting mechanical philosophy." The profession which it represents, rises, numerically and materially, daily in importance. Great works are everywhere being constructed, whose completion will make neighbours of us all, and its members are finding similar employment in most of the states of Europe. If, by common consent, George Stephenson is its chief ornament, the names of Brunel, Robert Stephenson, and Locke, are contributing to its renown. I am afraid that country gentlemen, as a rule, have not given very cordial encouragement to the progress of railway enterprise. We dislike the flippancy of assistant engineers, and to see our grounds and fields handed over to the rough occupation of great squads of "navvies," and are apt to think more of present discomforts than of future advantages. When directors expatiate on the "monstrous" nature of our claims, we tell them we are the best judges of the value of what belongs to us, and that pure patriotism is not the only motive which has attached them to their undertaking. Thus

the apple of discord appears at the outset of the proceedings, and further communication does not diminish our differences. Amicable adjustment proves to be impossible, and gentlemen of the long robe step in and reap rich harvests. My very intelligent and acute friend, the Laird of Ballochryne, who has twice travelled on the line between Dundee and Arbroath, thinks he has a superior right to discuss the merits of the railway system; and he lately confided to me that he does not so much object to "railways," but that he cannot abide those vile things called "locomotives!" Some of us hoped last year to procure parliamentary sanction to a line which proposed to supply direct communication between the capital of the Highlands and the towns and markets of the south; but chiefly through the great enterprise, energy, and ability of two legal gentlemen associated in business at Aberdeen, another scheme was preferred, and we have to bide our time. The proposal evoked all the powers of ridicule of the clever counsel of our opponents. Such "shocking bad" gradients had never been heard of, the curves were dangerous, provision had not been made for the sudden and impetuous rising of mountain torrents; and we were told that during one portion of the year, engines, carriages, and trucks would repose for weeks under the snows of winter.

We possessed great courage, but lacked—wisdom ! Hannibal's journey across the Alps was easy in comparison with the passage we projected. Our engineer had been successful in building many bridges, but Serjeant Murphy facetiously informed the committee, that to rely upon his ability in this instance, he must have earned the fame of "Pontifex Maximus !"

Arkwright, Watt, Stephenson, have each gained for us peaceful victories of the highest moment.

Peace hath her victories not less renowned than war's.

The ingenuity of the human mind seems never to weary, and fresh examples to excite and astonish are being constantly presented. It was about 1820, I believe, that a French savant proved, at least to his own satisfaction, that by the use of a galvanometer, lines of wire, and a battery, telegraphic messages could be transmitted far and near; and after an interval of many years the soundness of his theory (already tested in Germany by scientific men, who formed an alphabet by combinations of right and left deflections) has now been turned to practical account in Great Britain. It is difficult for a man of my habits and opportunities to realize such a possibility, still more to appreciate all the consequences of which the discovery is capable; but one can imagine that in matters of business, where early information and

rapid despatch are half the battle, nothing can equal its importance; and that in those hours of anxiety and grief which, some time or another, dim the sunniest paths, when the presence of valued friends is eagerly longed for, its comforts must be inestimable. Of Englishmen, Messrs. Cook and Wheatstone were amongst the earliest to patent the invention, and the first to construct a line for general purposes. Thus we are enabled to dispense with the services of the pigeon, whose wild flight used formerly to be available for the transmission of stirring intelligence; or, as a popular writer has expressed it, "to communicate to Dutchmen, for stock-jobbing purposes, the rise or fall of the funds, from London to Hamburg—from the clear shores of silver Thames to the muddy shallows of Zuyder Zee!"

Steam-ships, for which we are much indebted to the invention of Watt, have imparted a new character to navigation, and diminished the influence of winds and tides; but the class of sailing ships has likewise altogether changed for the better. In the art of "ship-building" the improvements have been among the most striking of the age. It has become a great department of industry, and helped conspicuously to the rise as well as fame of our commercial capital on the Clyde. Some towns, which looked as if their decline and fall were approaching through the col-

lapse of other industrial occupations long carried on there, have more than recovered their former prosperity from success in ship-building. The "clippers" which the builders of Aberdeen have launched have acquired a world-wide renown, that has been reflected on the ingenuity and skill of their constructors and the intelligent enterprise of their owners. And if the ships have been improved, it is gratifying to know that at least a corresponding advance has taken place in the skill, status, and habits of their commanders. Instead of skippers—brave, it is true, but often rash and ignorant—our vessels are now principally in charge of men who have been taught navigation with care and precision, and bring an amount of science to bear in their profession wholly unknown to the past generation. Hydrography too is with many of them a successful study, from which have followed valuable scientific results, and by whose agency distances have been diminished, and in long voyages great saving of expense accomplished. "Jack" himself remains the same imprudent fellow as of old. We are resolved, if we can, to cure him of that recklessness of life, and improvidence on shore, for which he is proverbial. We have built lighthouses, are establishing along our coasts, and at every seaport, the best-constructed boats and ingeniously-contrived apparatus, which

have saved hundreds otherwise doomed to destruction. We have formed societies for the relief of shipwrecked mariners, and the widows and children of others who have thus perished; and in our large towns "Jack" may easily escape from the clutches of "land-sharks" and the temptations of gin-palaces and beer-shops, by weighing anchor in those harbours of refuge called "Sailors' Homes." I doubt if we sufficiently appreciate the greatness of our "mercantile marine." We cannot have reviews of it, as of our ships of war, which have shielded us from many dangers and surrounded us with glory. It can produce no grand and concentrated individuality of impression; but when we sit down and calmly reckon the numbers, strength, wealth, and influence which it represents, we have enough to account for the wonder with which other nations regard the power and resources of Great Britain.

A few figures suffice to demonstrate in what an astonishing ratio the trade and industry of the country have been increasing.

The Post Office produced in 1800 about a million. The last year of the old rates the revenue benefited from it to the extent of two millions and a half. In the reign of Charles the Second it was farmed for 5000*l*.

In 1800 we imported 56,000,000 lbs. of cotton;

in 1840, 592,000,000 lbs. At the former period the exported value of cotton goods was about 5,000,000*l.*; last year it was over 20,000,000*l.*

In 1800 we imported about 20,000 tons of flax; now the imports are more than 100,000 tons.

A hundred years ago there were in Great Britain 59 furnaces, producing 17,000 tons of iron; in 1840 they amounted to 400, and yielded nearly a million and a half tons.

Our coal fields have been a source of untold wealth, and continue to be wonderfully developed. In the north we are without such aid for quickening our prosperity, but the counties of Fife, Lanark, Stirling, and Midlothian have thus benefited in an especial manner. In the counties of Durham and Northumberland alone those fields are estimated at 723 square miles, and represent an annual produce of 15,000,000 tons.

The income tax, imposed by Mr. Pitt in 1805, at 1*s.* 3*d.* in the pound on all incomes over 150*l.*, and at lower rates on smaller ones, yielded nearly 6,000,000*l.* Sir Robert Peel's Act of 1842, fixing it at 7*d.* in the pound, and limited to incomes of 150*l.* and upwards, yielded a revenue of nearly the same amount.

In 1802 the stamp duties were 3,000,000*l.*; in 1845 they amounted to nearly 8,000,000*l.*

When I was born, the shipping of the United Kingdom was not greater than that of London at the present day. Now, we have near 30,000 ships, with a tonnage of over 3,000,000, and giving employment to upwards of 180,000 men.

CHAPTER XIV.

GREAT NAMES—PAST AND PRESENT.

THE closing years of the past century introduced us to several names to which a great reputation belongs, and the present one has been still more prolific in that respect. Their partial recital is interesting, since it shows that on the battle-field, as in that peaceful progress which delights to encourage the influence of learning, genius, and philanthropy, Scotchmen are ably represented. The list is not presented for the sake of vain display. Although the two countries are indissolubly united in the bonds of close and warm sympathy, it is natural that we should retain in some degree a feeling of distinct nationality, which, if evidenced in the pride with which we survey the successful career of our compatriots, infers neither danger nor harm. But for the Union, most of them would not have had the opportunity; and in the prosecution of their efforts all

have been animated by a desire to occupy places side by side with those illustrious men who swell the long *rôle* of English worthies. The history of each is a useful study. It teaches that if fame is to be reached, no means must be neglected, and no obstacle deemed too formidable. High natural gifts, if not assiduously cultivated, leave few impressions behind. Respectable mediocrity and laborious application rarely fail. Genius and perseverance combined command success. What is eloquence, without copious information to discourse upon ? and bold assertion, if carefully prepared proofs are wanting ? Dashing officers do not mean great generals, and our most brilliant artists take years to culminate their fame.

Admiral Duncan destroyed the fleet of the Dutch, then a formidable rival on the sea, and made prisoner its brave chief, De Winter. He was created Viscount Duncan, and his son, become Earl of Camperdown, keeps alive the remembrance of the battle which his gallant father won. Admiral Elphinstone, for his services in command of the squadron which assisted at the capture of the Cape of Good Hope, was made a peer by the title of Viscount Keith. We have an admiral living among us who has experienced the vicissitudes of fortune in a remarkable manner. He has been fined and imprisoned, sentenced to the

degradation of the pillory, was deprived of the decoration of the Bath and his professional rank, and expelled from the House of Commons. The injustice inflicted on the Earl of Dundonald by those harsh proceedings and their consequences has long ago been exposed, but no reparation could atone for the years which made him the victim of cruel and base imputations. It redounds to the honour of Earl Grey, that on his accession to office in 1830, he reinstated him in the service. Since the days of Nelson we have had no such gallant and scientific commander. The episodes of his life are all brilliant, and whether in the naval employment of our own crown, or of other states which solicited the aid of his genius, he has achieved great ends and noble enterprizes with scanty means at his disposal. "Charlie" Napier, as everybody calls Sir Charles, was born in one of our southern counties, and early sent to sea, where his pluck and self-reliance have stood him good service. The Napiers are all clever. His ancestor was John Napier of Merchiston, celebrated for his invention of logarithms two centuries and more ago; and several of his cousins-german fill distinguished positions in contemporary military history. Being without active employment at the time in his own profession, he joined our land forces in the Peninsula as a volunteer, and helped to kill

Frenchmen at the battle of Busaco. Subsequently, in command of the 'Thames,' he effectually prevented the French from forming a fleet in the Mediterranean. He signalized himself on the Potomac during the second war with America. At great odds he engaged and dispersed the fleet of Dom Miguel, and terminated the civil war in Portugal. When the Sultan and Mehemet Ali fell out, Napier was sent to Beyrout, and profiting by his military experience, organized a land force, with which he stormed Sidon and defeated the army of Ibrahim Pasha on the heights of Mount Lebanon. Perhaps we like him best for the part he took in the capture of the stronghold of Acre, even although his laurels were gained by a disregard of the orders of his superior officer! He has since become a legislator and a financial and administrative reformer; but if his fame is to be posthumous, it will be among naval commanders that posterity must look for him, and not in lists of British statesmen and parliamentary orators.

George Eliott, who conducted the defence of Gibraltar—one of the most extraordinary on record—was created Lord Heathfield at the peace of Versailles. Sir Ralph Abercromby drove the French out of Egypt, and died on the field which his victory covered with glory. Sir John Moore was equally renowned for his bravery as a soldier, and the battle

of Corunna—hardly more than the retreat which preceded it—gives him a great place among our military commanders. He too died in the moment of his triumph.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
Nor in sheet nor in shroud we laid him,
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest,
With his martial cloak around him.

Sir David Baird succeeded him. Years before he had gained a high reputation in India, and won, by his gallantry at the siege and capture of Seringapatam, many laurels. His mother, animated by the spirit of a Roman matron, had early dedicated him to the service of the god of war, but was not blind to his failings. One day she was told that the fickle goddess had ceased her friendly attentions, and that Baird, chained to a common soldier, was a prisoner in the black hole of Calcutta. "God pity the man that's tied to our Davie," was the only remark which the grim old woman vouchsafed! Hope, Graham (Lord Lynedoch), Macdonald, Kempt, Leith, were among the Duke's trusted lieutenants through the Peninsular campaigns; and with the stubborn defence of Hougomont, the first brilliant episode of Waterloo, is associated the name of a north country baron, the brave and genial Lord Saltoun.

We have supplied our Indian empire with Go-

vernors-general, and chiefs for its great provinces. Malcolm and Mountstuart-Elphinstone are especially remembered as wise men in the East.

Belonging to the law, we have seen a Scotch advocate forcing himself into the foremost position at the English bar—becoming solicitor-general, and along with Thurlow, the chief prop in the House of Commons of the ministry of Lord North. We have seen him presiding with applause in the Court of Common Pleas, and the first Scotchman who reached the splendid office of Lord Chancellor. It had been better for his fame had he known less of the craft of statesmanship, for he lived to lose the confidence of both political parties, with each of whom he had in turn acted and coquetted. He occupies, however, a great place in the reign of George the Third, and one who, without family or other congenial influence, became Baron Loughborough and Earl Rosslyn, must have been no ordinary man.

Thomas, Lord Erskine, who, a few years later, likewise filled the Marble Chair, was confessedly the greatest forensic orator whom the bar of England has produced, but his efforts in parliament disappointed the expectations of his friends, and in neither House did he occupy as a debater the rank which Wedderburn had attained. In the view of contemporaries and of posterity his fame would have

been more enduring had he been content with his glorious reputation as an advocate, and declined the honours of the bench, although these belonged to the first judicial position in the world.

A third Scotchman, whose career we review with pride and admiration, has likewise occupied that distinguished post. Lord Brougham has been the eloquent and persistent denouncer of slavery in all parts of the world; the earnest and active friend of education; the zealous successor of Romilly and the able coadjutor of Mackintosh in the improvement of our criminal code; the defender of an injured Queen; a reformer of the crying abuses in Chancery; the propounder of a great measure for the settlement of the poor law; the champion of parliamentary and municipal reform; a philosopher, jurist, statesman, and writer, who has shed fresh lustre on that chair with which the great names of Somers, Nottingham, Hardwicke, and Campden are for ever associated. The high repute which he carried with him from the bar was more than sustained in the House of Commons, and the splendour of his oratory there has suffered no decay since he became a patrician in the land.

It was not long ago that Sir William Grant, a native of Banff, ceased to fill the second office in the Court of Chancery. As Master of the Rolls he

gained universal applause. His judgments will always be quoted as rare specimens of judicial excellence, not less remarkable for their soundness than for the elegance and perspicuity of language in which they are conveyed.* He must have had a strong as well as good head, if report speaks true that for years he never rose from his late dinner until two empty bottles of port and Madeira stood before him. It was said that Lord Eldon was inclined to be jealous of the favour with which his Master of the Rolls was regarded by the profession, but in their "amor bibendi" there must have subsisted between them the happiest agreement.

Mr. Abercromby—bred in the same profession, and now Lord Dunfermline—son of the brave Sir Ralph—has been "Speaker," and during one portion of that time, his countryman, Lord Brougham, sat on the woolsack in "the Lords."

"Plain John Campbell," as he chose, somewhat ostentatiously, to call himself—born in a Scottish manse—after being solicitor and attorney-general, leader of the English bar, and Lord Chancellor of Ireland, has obtained one coronet for his wife and another for himself, so that his successor will represent two baronies in the British peerage.

* Had he lived in France during the old rule, he would have been known as one of the *noblesse de la robe*.

The writings of Hume, Robertson, Smollett, Adam Smith, Dugald Stewart, Tytler, Sir James Mackintosh, and Sir Walter Scott, are of the greatest authority and interest.

Playfair and Dalzel, Gregory, Chalmers, Brewster, Bell, Forbes, Hamilton, have a reputation which has been borne far beyond the limits of their universities.

Some one has remarked that it is in poetry alone that modern nations have maintained the majesty of genius. A country which gave birth in the last century to Thomson, Burns, Scott, and Campbell, ought to occupy a good position in that respect.

In painting, Allan and Raeburn, Nasmyth and Wilkie, have obtained high rank, and the fame of William Dyce and Noel Paton, Watson Gordon, McCulloch, and Francis Grant, promises to be not less enduring. There are two painters in whom we take an unusual interest—one of them in the zenith of his powers, the other just beginning to exhibit them. Their early history is singularly alike. David Roberts and John Phillip began life as apprentices to house-painters, and used to decorate the “signs” of enterprising citizens. Roberts’s first picture sold for fifty shillings, and a single later effort has been worth a thousand guineas to him. Phillip was introduced by Pryse Gordon, then residing in Aberdeen, to the notice of Lord Panmure, who

generously undertook the expense of his professional education. He was placed under an artist in London, who soon began to exhibit towards him the sort of jealousy that Rubens felt for Vandyke, which at length was so intolerable, that forbearance becoming impossible, the master received severe personal chastisement from the pupil! He has since turned to admirable account those opportunities which were afforded him of studying the works of great masters in the north and south of Europe, and his early patrons have had the satisfaction of witnessing the successful commencement of a career which is sure to gain for him the "blue ribbon" of the Academy.

Engraving has imparted immensely increased interest to painting. Although the execution has been much improved since his day, it is to Sir Robert Strange, a native of Orkney, that we are indebted for the introduction of qualities and characteristics in the art which give us a style that is national. The middle classes have ceased to exhibit on their walls miserable and ridiculous daubs in oil, which made mankind assume every variety of deformity; and if all our purses are not heavy enough to procure the works of great painters, most of us have the means of consoling ourselves and gratifying our taste by the acquisition of those engraved representations which reflect the genius of the originals.

The sculpture of John Gibson—which does not suffer by comparison with the works of Canova, Flaxman, or Thorwaldsen—offers another attraction to those who would visit the “Eternal City.” In an unpretending studio at Edinburgh, John Steele is achieving silently, but surely, a name that will rescue it ere long from provincial obscurity.

Adam and Chambers, Stark and Playfair, have saved us from the reproach of poverty to which our architectural efforts might have been exposed, and Kemp and Bryce have lately supplied fresh evidence that the talent has not quite forsaken us.

Connected with medical science, few are more eminent than John and William Hunter, Black and Cullen. The rough and acute Abernethy is claimed by both Scotland and Ireland. Abercromby was a great constellation in Edinburgh, and London for many years did not know a more skilful surgeon than Liston. In the Peninsula, Guthrie was foremost in the profession. The living reputation of Professor Simpson is not surpassed. No wonder that woman-kind is prepared to fall down and worship him! At the present time, Fergusson, by common consent, is looked upon as the man best fitted to fill the place of Sir Benjamin Brodie; and who is a greater ornament than Mr. Syme? His boldness and skill as an operator are everywhere acknowledged, and “Syme’s

amputation of the foot," is a received term in all the medical schools of Europe. Nor is his general practice as a surgeon less brilliant. In the art of "nosology" his operations have, more than once, astounded us. Some of the jesting assertions in "Dan Corbet's" song are almost true when applied to the professor.

Such was his knowledge, he
Could make you a nose bran new,
I scarce can believe it, can you?

Bruce, the unfortunate Mungo Park, Mackenzie, and many others have been pioneers of British civilization, enterprising, persevering, fearless.

Ornithology owes much to the researches of Alexander Wilson, a Glasgow weaver.

A man who for years followed the calling of a working mason, has been adding to our knowledge of geology, and in that branch of science has established a reputation which honourably connects him with his countrymen Murchison and Lyell. Hugh Miller's fame is not of the ephemeral kind. His investigations have earned for him the applause of many of the savans of Europe, and the great name of Buckland counts among the number. 'The Old Red Sandstone' may be read with interest, by the wise as well as by the simple. From the 'Testimony of the Rocks' he seeks to reconcile the

geology of the Pentateuch with the geology of nature, and suggests many considerations which should help to dispel perplexing doubts and fears. There is no living journalist who writes purer English, in a style remarkable for its strength and polish. His career,—its poor beginning, and his present social rank—supplies the most encouraging lessons. Those on whom Providence has bestowed great mental powers, however mean their birth, need not despair of ultimate triumph; if their hearts should at times give way within them, their courage will rise as they contemplate the struggles and successes of Robert Burns and Hugh Miller.

We have other celebrities, some of whom are less extensively known, but they are not to be forgotten. As the century opened, Edinburgh society was made more attractive by the entrance into it of a number of young men of whom high hopes were entertained. Many of them are the ornaments of it now. Jeffrey's fame has been carried far beyond the limits of his own capital. He has been its representative in parliament, and one of the most popular members in the assembly of St. Stephens. As an autocrat of the critical world, none has been more distinguished, and now we honour him as a great judge. Brougham and Horner soon sought a wider field for the display of their wonderful gifts; but Cockburn and Moncreiff,

Cranstoun and Fullarton remained behind to raise the character of the Scottish bar, and to elevate the intellect of the Scottish bench. High as was their repute as advocates, it is consoling to think that the forensic abilities of Rutherford and McNeil, Hope and Wood, do not suffer by comparison, and that other worthy successors are springing up. In John Inglis and James Moncreiff, the son and grandson of old leaders of rival factions in the kirk, the public are pleased to recognize two men who already adorn their profession, and seem destined to reach its highest honours.

There is another man, also happily left to us, whom we delight to honour. Although Professor Wilson does not occupy Sir Walter Scott's position, few are so popular with every class, despite his unyielding Toryism. Success attends him whatever the effort to which he applies the versatile powers of his understanding. In philosophy, poetry, as a critic, a political writer, and in the regions of fiction, he has achieved high distinction. Perhaps we like him better in his prose than his poetry. He established and now chiefly supports the fame of 'Blackwood,' and none of his writings have exhibited his peculiar excellence so strikingly, making him soar above all other rhapsodists, as those delightful 'Noctes Ambrosianæ,' in which every subject is illuminated.

Who is so engaging as "Christopher North," by the water side, on the moors, or at Ambrose's? But if I speak of the Professor with enthusiasm, it is chiefly because I have been privileged to sit beside him in that inner circle where a good man always shines the most. There he is simply charming. In that large and powerful frame there beats the heart of a little child. Wisdom and mirth alternately flow from his lips, and as his children listen in rapt attention, you cannot tell if filial pride or filial love most excites them. Fare thee well, Christopher! I thank thee for the merriest evenings of my life.

CHAPTER XV.

THE END.

I HAVE little more to say. We have survived the excitement of the Corn Law discussion, and our anticipations of evil have calmed down. Poor soils continue to be cultivated as of old, and agricultural rents exhibit a steady advance!

A Liberal government is at the helm of public affairs. That scion of the historic ducal house of Bedford, who has been the hero of a hundred political fights—the “Lycurgus” of the Commons, as Sydney Smith calls him—again leads its deliberations, this time as first minister. Lord Palmerston is at his old post in the Foreign Office. The son, nephew, and son-in-law of Charles, Earl Grey, are the heads of great departments. The veteran Lord Lansdowne—the youthful Lord Henry Petty in the days of “All the Talents”—is the chief representative of the ministry in the Lords. Thomas Babington Macaulay, whose belief in Whiggery has never wavered, holds

high office, and by the force and point of his eloquence charms friends and foes alike. Official employment has extinguished the radical fire of the former colleague of Sir Francis Burdett, and Sir John Hobhouse is the dullest of Whigs. The son of Sir Samuel Romilly is on the straight road to judicial eminence, and may one day reach that envied post which would long ago have been his father's, but for his sad and premature death. Mr. Fox Maule sits in the cabinet. Mr. Rutherford, our greatest living lawyer in Scotland, a man of letters and of cultivated taste, is the fitting successor of Jeffrey in the office of Lord-Advocate. Of the representatives, unattached, of Scotch constituencies, the best known are probably Joseph Hume and the members for Aberdeen and Fife. Mr. Hume is indebted for his position solely to his indomitable perseverance. Nature has not been bountiful to him in the bestowal of a pleasing presence, and he is without popularity as a speaker. For years he has checked public expenditure with a vigilance that never sleeps, and exposed all attempts at jobbing, of whatever kind, with a courage which the bravest might envy. Ministers have often frowned upon him, and he has never basked in the sunshine of their favour; but neither sarcasms nor abuse have turned him from his path. He will not be remembered among our great statesmen, although

posterity will probably call him the most useful member of parliament whom the century has produced. Mr. Bannerman belongs to a family which has long flourished in the north. The respected head of it represents a baronetcy, connecting him with the time of our Scottish kings, and on which he confers increased honour by the sagacity and benevolence that distinguish him; but the member for Aberdeen, whatever his real feelings, rather affects to despise the aristocracy of birth, and casts in his lot with the people. With them he has always been popular, and the other day an enthusiastic constituent, devoted to crockery, had his wares, of every variety, ornamented with the motto, "Bannerman, the people's friend, for ever!" an act of homage which perchance may make both immortal. He has an universal acquaintance in "the House." Sir Robert nods to him, and Lord John addresses him familiarly. The chiefs of his party put quite as much reliance on his calculations as on those of official "whips." He drinks champagne with Lord Palmerston, and whisky and water with Mr. Muntz; talks "farming" to old George Byng, and with Sir Robert Inglis compares the state of "learning" in Marischal College and Oxford; exchanges blarney with Daniel O'Connell, and gives Colonel Sibthorpe a friendly poke in the ribs; is an authority at

"Brookes'," and a magnate at the "Reform." Lord Melbourne early took a fancy for his shrewdness and frankness, and used often to send for him. On these occasions the premier lay in bed, and conversation had the widest range. We all know that the minister found no part of his duties so irksome as the appointment of bishops; and it was when Bannerman was thus seated beside him one morning, that he gave emphatic relief to his feelings, by consigning to eternal penance in purgatory, or some other place still more unpopular, the soul of a pious prelate who had been disobliging enough to die the day before! Everybody likes Mr. Bannerman, and it were strange if they didn't, for his heart is in the right place, and all his friendships are genial. Captain James Erskine Wemyss possesses many eccentricities and much good sense. He never speaks in "the House," but in the "kitchen" he is a great leader. His voice is pitched in the highest keys, and his accent is the purest Doric; hence he is familiarly known as "Jock" Wemyss. The radicals of Fife are sad thorns in his side, and worry him dreadfully at election seasons, but he is no meek sufferer. Regarding the hustings as he would the quarter-deck, he manfully asserts his authority, and abuses the "eyes" of his tormentors in the plainest of sailor fashion.

Sitting on the same side are Richard Cobden and John Bright. Their earliest appearances sustained all their out-of-door reputation, and at once obtained for them the "ear of the House." The House of Commons is not easily imposed upon, and if these men had been mere pretenders, half of its members would have been eager to expose them. It is impossible indeed to deny their powers; and if the nation is to be benefited by the removal of corn protection, to them it is that its gratitude is mainly due. "The name," said Sir Robert Peel, "which ought to be, and will be associated with the success of these measures, is the name of one who, acting, as I believe, from pure and disinterested motives, has, with untiring energy, made appeals to our reason, and has enforced those appeals with an eloquence the more to be admired, because it was unaffected and unadorned; the name which ought chiefly to be associated with the success of these measures, is the name of Richard Cobden."

Now that O'Connell and Sheill have gone, no Irishman is left to remind us of the days of Grattan and Plunkett.

The Opposition is powerful, numerically and intellectually; although civil warfare has destroyed its cohesiveness, and divided the allegiance of those who compose it.

"Sir Robert" still fronts the minister, and he is not alone. It is long since Sir James Graham left the company of the Whigs, and became his trusted friend and colleague. He sits beside him now. Younger men have likewise remained faithful. The descendant of the imbecile minister of George the Second, and the son of that other Duke of Newcastle, the assertion of whose antiquated opinions excites our laughter, is one of them.

Lord Lincoln's administrative ability, and the great powers of Sidney Herbert and Mr. Gladstone, are evidence of their chief's sagacity in the choice of his lieutenants. The Egertons, the Stanhopes, the Ashleys, and the Ryders, all help to sustain the influence and importance of the "Peelites."

The Corn Law debates drew two men from the back benches to assume the leadership of the "protectionist" party. Differing widely in their previous habits and pursuits, they have worked admirably in political concert. The house of Portland has given us more than one statesman of mark since those days when, in the person of the compatriot and friend of William of Orange, it first took root in England, and Lord George Bentinck will add to its historic fame. Abandoning the excitement of the turf and the pleasures of the chase, he has devoted himself to facts and figures with unwearying determination, and

an ability which has astonished those even who knew him best. The rise of his comrade has been still more remarkable. The audience which listened in rapt attention to the orator who, with brilliant sarcasm and polished invective, denounced Sir Robert Peel as the head of "an organized hypocrisy," and recollected the failure of the earlier parliamentary efforts of the author of 'Vivian Grey' was altogether unprepared for the grandeur of such displays; and in spite of his plebeian taint, the heirs to the ducal houses of Lennox, Churchill, Manners, and Temple, and the scions of other patrician families, have been forced to accept his guidance, and to acknowledge that he is the ablest of their generals.

In the other House Lord Stanley—seated there in right of his father's barony—upholds his ancient reputation in the Commons as the "Rupert of debate;" and in anticipation of that period when Fortune shall have wearied of her attentions to "Lord John," is already the chosen leader who is to reunite the broken columns of the Conservatives, and reverse the attainder of the rights of the country party. "The Duke" has not yet forsaken politics, and has probably forgotten the time when he thought it would be madness in him to guide the vessel of the state. Lord Aberdeen is at his side, grave and thoughtful, always watchful of an opportunity

to disparage the foreign policy of his versatile rival. The weight of years seems only to stimulate the fine intellect of Lord Lyndhurst, ever powerful as an ally, and dangerous as an opponent. Lord Brougham continues to be the energetic friend of progress, and his cordiality for his old comrades the Whigs is manifested in the hatred with which he regards them. Lord Campbell occasionally breaks a lance with him, and 'Punch' amuses the world with admirable representations of "two Scotch terriers." The other day the English Ex-chancellor was finding fault with the Irish Ex-chancellor, for having spoken of Edinburgh as the "Modern Athens," a term which, from having been dubiously applied in the first instance, its people have never cared to appropriate. But Lord Campbell contended for its justice, "inasmuch as my noble friend, one of its most illustrious citizens, is at once a Pericles, a Sophocles, and a Demosthenes!" The episcopal bench is not without distinguished occupants. Its claim to scholastic eminence receives the highest support from the Bishops of London and St. Davids. If the Bishop of Exeter has abandoned his "pamphleteering slang," he is still renowned as a great logician and powerful debater; and the nation is delighted to find in Dr. Wilberforce, the new Bishop of Oxford, a man who surpasses his venerated father

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in eloquence and ability. It was well for Lord Eldon that he was snatched away from the evils to come. Roman Catholic emancipation was to destroy the Church. The Reform Bill was to revolutionize the state; and now, by the abolition of the Corn Laws, those great landed investments of his, the labour of so many years, would have been of no value, and inadequate to contribute the meanest living!

But our empire is still great and glorious. Its citizens are prosperous and happy; and on the throne there sits a princess, admirably supported by a wise and enlightened consort, who, more than any other of her predecessors, lives in the loyal and devoted affections of the people.

I have known less of the bitterness of sorrow than most men, and have been permitted to see my children established in life, prosperous and happy, dutiful and loving still. My eldest son followed the fortunes of "the Duke," was severely wounded at the battle of Orthez, witnessed the triumph of our arms at Waterloo, and now wears the decoration of a Knight Commander of the Bath. He has long resided with us, and in his society, and that of his wife and children, we spend our days over again.

The hoary grandsire smiles the hour away,
Won by the charm of innocence at play;
He bends to meet the artless burst of joy,
Forgets his age, and acts again the boy.

Our two younger boys early found employment, the one in the stirring city of Manchester, the other in the not less enterprising city of New York, and ample wealth has rewarded their exertions. Our "cotton lord," as we call him, has retired from those active pursuits, and become the laird of a neighbouring estate, which the necessities of our family forced them to part with generations ago. Upon it he has erected a stately mansion, furnished with all modern appliances, and our "old house" in comparison is humble and unattractive. He discourses fluently on drainage and planting, and the best points of his shorthorns and southdowns; but now and then I fancy that his pleasantest memories are with the busy mart of Manchester, and the excitement of those operations, no matter what anxieties accompanied them, which have given him rank among the merchants of the day. His brother has had to encounter hard heads in the transatlantic commercial capital, and his struggle has been more arduous, but he too has been victorious. We miss his bright and genial countenance, and the converse of his warm and honest heart. He has taken a wife from amongst the daughters of the country, and the republic of the United States claims him for her son. I must dwell for a moment more on the child of our old age. When she left, we felt as if some blight



had fallen on us. That sunny smile and incomparable gentleness had gone to make another happy. It is long since she pledged her troth; and when she receives us at her own home, and never wearies in her acts of love and kindness, our hearts overflow with gratitude for the beneficence of God. Blest with her husband's constant affection, she is surrounded by numerous olive branches, to share, without diminishing it. The spring time of her beauty has passed away, but in her matronly pride and mature womanhood, to me she presents herself as almost more engaging than before. I am forcibly reminded of her dear mother in those other days long since departed, and am tempted to exclaim—

O matre pulchra—filia pulchrior!

* * * * *

It is many months since I commenced these pages, and as I quietly peruse them I am reminded of much that is beyond my recall for ever. Friends and comrades gone, kindnesses unappreciated, opportunities lost.

Memories that make the heart a tomb,
 Regrets which glide through the spirit's gloom,
 And with ghastly whisper tell
 That joy once lost is pain.

I am no longer the hale old man I was then. She

too, who five and fifty years ago took me "for better for worse, for richer for poorer," the faithful and loving companion of my life, exhibits symptoms of that decay which foreshadows the approach of the one event that is common to us all. It behoves us not to disregard such warnings, and to put our house in order, "or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern."

THE END.

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